

Do We Need A New Bible? Reflections on the Proposed Oxford Hebrew Bible(*)

For many hundreds of years the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament has been a fundamental document not just for two or even three major world religions but also for much of our western cultural, political and intellectual history ⁽¹⁾. It is difficult to attempt to evaluate the extent of its influence on art, music and literature, for instance, and although its reception in other great civilizations differs considerably and is often only far more recent, yet in our modern integrated world its prominence has become global.

Because this influence has been most widely experienced through its inclusion as part of the Christian Bible, the vast majority of those who refer to “the Bible”, whether for religious or other purposes, do so quite unconsciously to the work in translation. This has been the case from the very earliest days of the Christian church. As Christianity and Judaism parted company, so the knowledge of Hebrew and western Aramaic soon became quite unfamiliar and “the Bible” was a work initially in Greek, Latin or Syriac, and then later in many other languages, the number of which is increasing all the time through the work of the Bible Society and other such agencies ⁽²⁾. Indeed, Jerome’s struggles to convince his contemporaries in the late fourth/early fifth centuries that it would be better to have a Latin Old Testament translated direct from the Hebrew rather than at one remove from the Greek, is a testimony to the extent to which the importance of Hebrew as the language of the larger part of the Christian Bible came to be

(*) This article served as the basis for the public lecture given at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome on 27 March 2009, in connection with the “Joseph Gregory McCarthy Professorship” held by the author.

(1) The question of terminology is difficult and nothing is wholly satisfactory. In this lecture I use the term Old Testament only when considering this literature within a specifically Christian context. Because my discussion concentrates mainly on the presentation of the text, I shall mostly use the term Hebrew Bible as the least unsatisfactory; it is unfortunate, of course, that as a shorthand it overlooks the presence of a small amount of Aramaic, though in principle what I say relates to that as well.

(2) According to the Bible Society, over two thousand languages now have at least part of the Bible available in translation; this represents approximately one third of the number of languages currently in use throughout the world.

undervalued. For most purposes, therefore, the precise nature of the Hebrew text is of little interest to the vast majority of Bible readers. They are completely unaware of the problems with which scholars of the text struggle daily, many of which in fact get lost from view in the imprecise science of translation, and they would probably be initially quite surprised if they were told that in fact no translation is free from some form of necessary textual emendation or conjecture⁽³⁾.

1. *The Present Position*

During the first Christian millennium, the Jewish community, as would be expected, maintained its adherence to the Hebrew text and continued to develop it in some respects, not, of course, deliberately changing it by this time, but adding vocalization and other scribal marks and conforming variations between textual traditions to a single ideal type. The results of their careful work are known to us now from a large number of medieval manuscripts. The best complete one that still survives may celebrate its 1000th anniversary this very year⁽⁴⁾,

⁽³⁾ E. Tov, "The Textual Basis of Modern Translations of the Hebrew Bible: The Argument Against Eclecticism", *Textus* 20 (2000) 193-211, has argued that, because of the complexities of this history of the Biblical text, "the public deserves a diplomatic translation of a single text, be it MT, the LXX, or the Vulgate" (210), and he cites NJPST as an example to follow. However, this is not entirely practical, in that MT sometimes cannot make sense as it stands, so that effectively some form of indirect emendation has to be invoked in order to arrive at a readable translation, a procedure which invites some critical comments from Tov himself (n. 45). In my view, a well-grounded emendation, whether textually supported or conjectural, is often a more satisfactory, as well as more honest, way of treating such difficulties. As currently happens, footnotes can alert the reader to the fact that this has been done. Interestingly, with regard to Isa 7,11 discussed below, NJPST in fact adopts the emended vocalization without even a note. It is possible the translators would justify this by appeal to one of the devices proposed by a few previous scholars to explain the Masoretic pointing as being in conformity with the emended version, but this is desperate and a concession of the essential point; for details, see D. BARTHÉLEMY, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*. Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations (OBO 50/2; Fribourg – Göttingen 1986) II, 46-47. Isa 14,4 is an even more striking example of the translation explicitly following a variant reading from MT. For additional comments in response to Tov, see B. ALBREKTSON, "Masoretic or Mixed: On Choosing a Textual Basis for a Translation of the Hebrew Bible", *Textus* 23 (2007) 33-49.

⁽⁴⁾ The first colophon dates the manuscript according to five different chronologies, giving rise to four possible dates, namely 1008, 1009, 1010 and 1013. Based on the considerations that the mistakes are more likely due to the use of chronologies that were not commonly used at the time of the copying together with an agreement between two of those that survive this screening process, BEIT-

making the considerations in this lecture particularly appropriate. It has long been housed in St Petersburg and is known as *Leningradensis* from the name of that city at the time when it came to be adopted as the text which would serve as the basis for the most widely used scholarly edition of the Hebrew Bible⁽⁵⁾.

This manuscript, then, is the text used for the edition of the Hebrew Bible known as the *Biblia Hebraica*. This edition is currently in its fourth edition, and a fifth edition is under preparation⁽⁶⁾. These editions differ considerably from one another in some important ways, but their fundamental policy of text presentation is the same. The printed text conforms as closely as possible to the manuscript *Leningradensis*⁽⁷⁾, and matters which the editors consider to be of text-

ARIÉ *et al.* eliminate 1010 and 1013 and prefer 1008; cf. M. BEIT-ARIÉ – C. SIRAT – M. GLATZER (eds.), *Codices Hebraici Litteris Exarati Quo Tempore Scripti Fuerint Exhibetens*. Tome I, jusqu'à 1020 (Monumenta Palaeographica Medii Aevi, Series Hebraica; Turnhout 1997) 112-131 (esp. 117-18); this date has therefore been adopted by the editors of *BHQ*; cf. A. SCHENKER *et al.* (eds.), *Biblia Hebraica, quinta editione cum apparatu critico novis curis elaborato*. General Introduction and Megilloth (Stuttgart 2004) xix; their authority in this matter commands respect. Other authorities, however, favour 1009; this is stated without equivocation by A. DOTAN (ed.), *Biblia Hebraica Leningradensia, Prepared according to the Vocalization, Accents, and Masora of Aaron ben Moses ben Asher in the Leningrad Codex* (Peabody, MA 2001) ix, by M. H. GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN (ed.), *The Book of Isaiah* (HUBP; Jerusalem 1995) xlvii, and by E. TOV, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, MN – Assen 2001) 47. G.E. WEIL expresses uncertainty over the precise date: "dated to 1009 or 1008 A. D."; cf. K. ELLIGER – W. RUDOLPH (eds.), *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart 1984) xiii; the order here suggests that he also preferred 1009 as the date. Certainty is thus clearly not possible, but the millennial anniversary must be at least close to, if not actually in, the present year.

⁽⁵⁾ The reasons for accepting it as the earliest and best complete text in the Aaron ben Moses ben Asher (early tenth century) tradition have been frequently rehearsed (see recently DOTAN, *Biblia Hebraica Leningradensia*, vi-xxiii), even if in some respects it is not as satisfactory as the earlier, but unfortunately not completely preserved, Aleppo Codex.

⁽⁶⁾ For the principles of this new edition, see the "General Introduction" by the Editorial Committee in the first fascicule to have appeared, SCHENKER *et al.* (eds.), *Biblia Hebraica, quinta editione*, vii-xxvi. Three further fascicules have so far appeared since. An excellent illustrative discussion of the characteristics of the project is provided by the editor of Deuteronomy, C. MCCARTHY, "What's New in *BHQ*? Reflections on *BHQ* Deuteronomy", *PIBA* 30 (2007) 54-69.

⁽⁷⁾ For minor exceptions to this rule, see the editorial introductions to the third edition (which was the first to be based on this manuscript), by R. KITTEL, with slight modifications after his death by P. KAHLE. In the fourth (the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*), even these modest exceptions were excluded: "We have thought it

critical importance are included in the apparatus. In earlier editions, this apparatus was in fact divided into two sections, for matters of greater or lesser significance, but in the current and forthcoming editions this rather artificial distinction has been dropped.

There is another important critical edition also under preparation at the present time, of which 3 volumes (Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel) have appeared so far. This is the Bible Project of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem⁽⁸⁾. It differs from the *Biblia Hebraica* in certain important respects. First, it follows a different manuscript, namely the Aleppo Codex, which the editors believe to be the most superior masoretic manuscript which survives (though for most purposes the differences from *Leningradensis* are insignificant). Unfortunately, however, this manuscript has suffered damage in the past, so that the edition will have to follow an alternative manuscript when it reaches those parts. Secondly, the edition includes no less than four apparatuses, each of which aims to report as fully as possible on variations in the ancient translations, in the much older manuscripts among the Dead Sea Scrolls and the like, and so on. The aim here is to be factual in reporting the data; no attempt is made to evaluate the text-critical worth of the variants or to catalogue the many conjectural emendations which scholars have felt obliged to propose over the years (and most of which are rejected by the majority of their colleagues). Only in tersely expressed notes to the apparatuses does this edition offer some evaluative comments, usually of a noticeably conservative nature⁽⁹⁾.

best to reproduce the text of the latest hand of L with close fidelity. We have accordingly refrained from «removing obvious scribal errors»"; ELLIGER – RUDOLPH (eds.), *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, xii (the citation is from Kittel's introduction to the third edition). Even so, *BHS* still deviates from L in placing the books of Chronicles last and in certain other details.

⁽⁸⁾ For a detailed description of the project, see the editor's introduction to the first volume: GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN (ed.), *The Book of Isaiah*, xi–xlviii.

⁽⁹⁾ A number of comparative analyses or reviews of these (as well as of other) editions have been published over the years; examples include M. GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN, "Editions of the Hebrew Bible—Past and Future", "*Sha'arei Talmon*": *Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (eds. M. FISHBANE – E. TOV) (Winona Lake, IN 1992) 221–242 (with regard solely to the Masoretic text); J.A. SANDARS, "*The Hebrew University and Biblia Hebraica Quinta*", *JBL* 118 (1999) 518–526 (also relevant is his much earlier "Text and Canon: Concepts and Methods", *JBL* 98 [1979] 5–29); E. TOV, "Hebrew Scripture Editions: Philosophy and Praxis", *From 4QMMT to Resurrection. Mélanges qumraniens en hommage à Émile Puech* (eds. F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ – A. STEUDEL – E. TIGCHELAAR) (STDJ 61; Leiden 2006) 281–312.

Although the two editions thus differ, their underlying policy is comparable, namely to reproduce the text of an important medieval manuscript of the Hebrew text and to relegate to the apparatus all reporting and evaluation of variants from whatever period, as well as conjectures for emendation or the adoption of what may be considered a superior reading from antiquity.

In this regard the presentation of the Hebrew Bible differs from the scholarly editions of other texts from antiquity, whether biblical, such as the Greek text of the New Testament and, indeed, of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible known as the Septuagint, or other, such as the Greek and Latin classics. In these cases it has long been standard practice for the editor to gather all the evidence available to him or her, such as different manuscripts, citations in other works and so on, and then to produce what he or she regards as the probable original form of the text — a process which may well also include some conjectural emendation of passages which are deemed to be corrupt but for which no reading has survived that seems to give a satisfactory solution. The apparatus in such an edition documents the evidence from all the available sources while the printed text does not represent any one of those sources in its entirety. What is more, in the case of classical texts it is far from unknown for the editor to incorporate decisions about later editorial activity and so to omit sections which are deemed not to derive from the original author. The result is known as an eclectic text, whereas in the case of the standard Hebrew Bible editions it is known as a diplomatic text.

In recent decades the oddity of the different ways in which these texts are being edited has become more apparent, not least since the discovery and now complete publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls. These scrolls date from about a thousand years prior to the manuscripts which I have mentioned so far, and so take us back well over half way to the time of original composition of the biblical books. Included among the scrolls are many manuscripts of biblical books, admittedly not complete by any means (with the exception of one almost complete scroll of Isaiah) and indeed in many cases fragmentary in the extreme. But they are of vital importance to the textual critic in demonstrating on the one hand that these works have not been changed or suffered damage in the intervening centuries to such an extent as to make the work of textual criticism worthless in the first place, and on the other that there are innumerable larger or smaller differences which call for careful evaluation. While many are matters of spelling and the like and

others are certainly to be judged as inferior, there are certainly readings preserved which most scholars would judge to be superior to those preserved in the medieval manuscripts (some, indeed, happily confirming what had previously been suggested by way of scholarly conjecture). It is not widely known, for instance, but worthy of note in this regard that in what was for half a century the standard English Bible translation, the *Revised Standard Version*, something approaching twenty readings from the Isaiah scroll were included in the text of that book which it translated.

Another factor which has altered since the *Biblia Hebraica* project was first launched is that we now have modern critical — eclectic — editions of most of the ancient versions, the translations of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, Latin, Syriac and Aramaic. These versions too, though differing in their importance for this particular purpose, are generally agreed in some places to be rendering a form of text which differs in one way or another from the Hebrew text as known to us today. This is particularly important with regard to the translation into Greek, for this was undertaken in the last pre-Christian centuries and thus prior to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, an event whose consequences for the development of rabbinic Judaism are of especial importance in that it included the stabilization of the received text of the Hebrew Bible in such a way that significant change could not be entertained thereafter.

2. *The Proposed New Edition and its Strengths*

In these circumstances it may come as no surprise to learn that from time to time there have been calls for a completely new edition of the Hebrew Bible⁽¹⁰⁾. The argument has been that it should be treated like any other text from antiquity. We should no longer just print a copy of a medieval manuscript and include all comment upon it in an apparatus, but rather, on the basis of all the evidence that is now

⁽¹⁰⁾ E.g., A. GELSTON, "Isaiah 52:13-53:12: An Eclectic Text and a Supplementary Note on the Hebrew Manuscript Kennicott 96", *JSS* 35 (1990) 187-211; for an earlier attempt at just such an eclectic text (though not so methodologically disciplined) see the series *The Sacred Books of the Old Testament. A Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text, Printed in Colors with Notes* (ed. P. HAUPT) (Leipzig – Baltimore – London 1893-1904). For a list of other examples with regard to individual books or parts of books, see Tov, "Textual Basis", 194, n. 3. Needless to say, many critical commentaries also provide and justify an eclectic text.

available to us we should seek to publish an eclectic text, one which evaluates the readings of the scrolls and the evidence from the ancient versions as well as the best-informed scholarly conjectures on texts which most agree have suffered some form of corruption in the copying process over many centuries. With all reserve and sobriety, therefore, we should seek to publish a text of the Hebrew Bible which is as near as we can make it a version of the original as it left the hands of its final authors or editors. As with any other edition of a text, mistakes will no doubt be made, but these can be improved and corrected as new evidence comes to light or as further research clarifies what currently remains obscure. There should be no difference in principle from the way that any other ancient text is treated.

And now, indeed, that is just what is to happen. Following an earlier study of Genesis 1-11 along these lines⁽¹¹⁾, Ron Hendel has now publicly announced what has been known privately for a few years, namely that he has organized a team of leading scholars whose work he will edit to produce what is to be called *The Oxford Hebrew Bible*⁽¹²⁾. He has recently published a substantial article setting out the terms of the project and justifying it as well as accompanying it with sample editions by three of his colleagues to illustrate the nature of the work in progress⁽¹³⁾.

⁽¹¹⁾ R.S. HENDEL, *The Text of Genesis 1-11*. Textual Studies and Critical Edition (New York – Oxford 1998).

⁽¹²⁾ In view of my own institutional affiliation, I should perhaps make clear that the proposal for this project was submitted to OUP in New York. Given their previously successful publication of Hendel's monograph on Genesis 1-11, together with the scholarly distinction of both Hendel and his team of colleagues, it is not altogether surprising that they should have accepted his new proposal. Under the way in which OUP operates, all agreements to publish must receive final approval from the Delegates in Oxford. By the time they took advice on this particular proposal, however, the decision was already more or less a *fait accompli*, despite hurried written reservations having been expressed to them when they sought further advice at very much the eleventh hour. As will become clear in what follows, I have the greatest scholarly interest in this project and high regard for the team of scholars involved. But for reasons which will become apparent, I regret the proposed title and its implications for the sound presentation of the text of the Hebrew Bible.

⁽¹³⁾ R. HENDEL, "The Oxford Hebrew Bible: Prologue to a New Critical Edition", VT 58 (2008) 324-351; S. WHITE CRAWFORD – J. JOOSTEN – E. ULRICH, "Sample Editions of the Oxford Hebrew Bible: Deuteronomy 32:1-9, 1 Kings 11:1-8, and Jeremiah 27:1-10 (34 G)", VT 58 (2008) 352-366. See too the separate presentation of a further passage in R. HENDEL, "Plural Texts and Literary Criticism: For Instance, 1 Samuel 17", *Textus* 23 (2007) 97-114.

This major new development in the publication of the text of the Hebrew Bible deserves careful consideration and evaluation. And in view of the fact that later on I shall venture to offer some criticisms, it may be instructive to begin by underlining the extent to which I agree with many of the fundamental principles and procedures.

In the first place, and perhaps at the lowest level of engagement, it may be readily accepted that an eclectic edition of the Masoretic Text as known to us from the medieval manuscripts is conceivable. No manuscript is perfect, but it has to be said that very little of practical worth would be gained by the exercise. For example, *Leningradensis* has a habit of omitting a *mappiq*, the dot which is used to distinguish the letter *he* at the end of a word when it is used as a consonant rather than as a vowel letter, at the end of the word הַ; see, for instance, Isa 2,15; 30,25; 40,9; Ezek 17,22.24; 21,31 (and cf. Isa 5,16). Why this should be so is unknown; it is not done consistently (see, e.g., Isa 57,7), so that either the scribe tried unsuccessfully to introduce what he considered to be a necessary correction to standard spelling or, more probably, he just frequently made a mistake in the copying of this particular word for some obscure reason. Either way, it would be possible, in an eclectic text, to correct this on the basis of most other masoretic manuscripts. Again, slightly more significantly, there are a few examples of places where the masoretic tradition more generally has failed to recognize reduplicated forms of nouns and so has written them as two words (e.g. Isa 2,20; 61,1; Jer 46,20); these sometimes caused confusion to commentators in antiquity, but they trouble no one today. Thus while such minutiae are of interest to specialists in masoretic studies, they make not a shred of difference to understanding what the text is, so that there remain certain aesthetic attractions in the maintenance of a diplomatic edition even at this level. The general lack of importance of masoretic variations for textual criticism in the sense that we are considering it here was long ago conceded, one senses reluctantly, in a famous article in *Biblica* by Goshen Gottstein⁽¹⁴⁾, the driving force behind the establishment of the Hebrew University Bible Project.

Secondly and far more significantly, we may also readily agree with Hendel that there can now be no doubt that copies of books of the Hebrew Bible varied from one another in innumerable different ways

⁽¹⁴⁾ M.H. GOSHEN GOTTSTEIN, "Hebrew Biblical Manuscripts: Their History and Their Place in the HUBP Edition", *Bib* 48 (1967) 243-290.

in the pre-stabilization period, some of the differences being relatively minor but others, as we shall see, being far more substantial. This is not, in fact, new knowledge since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, as is sometimes implied. It was recognized by most serious textual critics long before that on the basis of the Septuagint, the pre-stabilization translation which in the case of some books reflects an alternative tradition (or should we call it edition?) from what eventually became the Masoretic Text. The cases of Samuel and Jeremiah are the most celebrated of the examples, though they are not in fact alone. What the Dead Sea Scrolls did was, for the first time, to give us Hebrew versions of (parts, sometimes only fragments of) these alternative traditions, thus finally burying the notion that was sometimes voiced that these differences in the Septuagint were to be ascribed entirely to the work of the translator. But while it remains the case that this is always an important possibility to bear in mind in any individual case, the evidence against it being so in every case was already overwhelming long before the scrolls were discovered. In the case of Samuel, for example, there was already the evidence before us of the Hebrew text of Chronicles in passages where it runs parallel with Samuel, as well as the evidence of the later paraphrases by Josephus and the like.

Now, given these circumstances, Hendel and his colleagues clearly have every right to affirm that in such cases the textual critic has the responsibility to exercise his or her best judgment in choosing which of the variant texts is likely to be more original. From a purely academic point of view there can be no justification for assuming that the masoretic tradition must always be superior. While such a form of fundamentalism is known in certain circles, it tends to be restricted to the most extreme orthodox Jews who are able, of course, to handle the Hebrew text with a certain sort of facility. Whatever Christian fundamentalists may say, they are generally dependent on modern translations which, whether they know it or not, inevitably incorporate some of this scholarship simply in order to produce an intelligible rendering. Conservative Christian scholars may certainly be more reluctant than others to concede the issue, but they seek to argue their case on the basis of how they see the evidence, not simple prejudice.

I therefore have no hesitation in affirming that in this regard the text-critical work of the proposed *Oxford Hebrew Bible* is entirely justified and indeed necessary. Although I have not engaged much in my own writings with Samuel and Jeremiah, I have written

commentaries on Chronicles, on Ezra-Nehemiah and on parts of Isaiah, and in all three there are places where, along with all others, I have sought to set out the reasons for the text-critical choices of just this sort that I have made.

Third, I would go further and agree also that there are occasions where none of the surviving evidence is sufficient to produce a plausible reading and where the scholar has ultimately to conjecture what the original reading must have been such that it explains the development of the textual evidence that now survives. This procedure has long been known as emendation, a term with which Hendel is unhappy because it implies a certain innate superiority in the Masoretic Text. While we may have some sympathy with his cavil in theory, his objection is not well founded. "Emendation" is the term almost universally used in textual criticism for the procedure involved, and in most cases it has nothing whatever to do with the favouring of one manuscript tradition over another, so that if we are to adhere to Hendel's plea to apply standard critical procedures to the Hebrew Bible, it seems to me that we might as well keep its preferred terminology as well.

3. Reservations about the Proposal

Given this extent of agreement with Hendel's basic critical position, as well as with the apparently cautious approach which his collaborators' demonstrate in their published samples, it may be asked why any difficulty should then be expressed with this project. My reservations fall into three groups, one of a technical nature deriving from closer consideration of the nature of the Hebrew text, another about some fundamental aspects of the project itself, and the third more pragmatic or practical, based on considerations of the likely reception of the publication.

a) The Distinctive Nature of the Hebrew Text

I start, then, with consideration of the first group. Along with others, Hendel urges that the text of the Hebrew Bible should be edited in the same way as any other text from antiquity for which there is multiple attestation. This seemingly obvious procedure in fact covers two issues which need to be more sharply distinguished. When such claims are made, many who advance them mean that the scholar should exercise his or her judgment in the same way as any other text-critical scholar. All relevant evidence should be dispassionately collected and

considered and judgments should be made according to the usual text-critical criteria. Despite the differences between the nature of the evidence available for the Hebrew Bible from most other texts from antiquity, this principle is to be endorsed. Rhetorically, the point that is being made is that in this work there is no place for factors of religious or other such dogmatism to intrude. In evaluating the evidence, preference should not be afforded against better evidence to the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint or the Vulgate, for instance, each of which has paramount authority in one religious circle or another.

That entirely acceptable adoption of the slogan that the text of the Hebrew Bible should be treated like any other should not be confused, however, with suggesting that the text of the Hebrew Bible is itself like any other, because it is not. The Masoretic Text we have and with which we work — the text which the *Oxford Hebrew Bible* will apparently print unchanged in cases where there is no reason to favour an alternative reading — is not in itself a unified entity in the way that in principle most other texts are. It has developed in the post-composition period in at least two major ways. In the first place the spelling of many words has changed over the centuries in ways that we can largely trace by comparing the Hebrew of the Biblical text with that of Hebrew inscriptions contemporary with the times when the Bible was first being written. This includes principally the addition of vowel letters, that is to say, to an originally purely consonantal text certain consonants could be added to serve also as vowels. Moreover, at least one of these vowel letters itself was changed on most of its occurrences, namely the replacement of an *h* at the end of a word with a *w* to serve as the vowel *o*; a final *h* in the Masoretic Text now usually serves only as a vowel *a*. (It only adds to the fun that there are some places, perhaps as many as fifty, where this alteration has not been carried out⁽¹⁵⁾). Moreover, it should be noted that the addition of the other vowel letters has not, for the most part, been undertaken consistently⁽¹⁶⁾, and that interestingly some of the Dead Sea Scrolls,

⁽¹⁵⁾ For discussion and examples, see GK §§7c, 91e; JM §§7b, 94h; I. YOUNG, "Observations on the Third Person Masculine Singular Pronominal Suffix *-H* in Hebrew Biblical Texts", *HS* 42 (2001) 225-242 (with further bibliography). My comments above refer only to the Masoretic understanding, of course, and are not intended to engage with the disputed question of the earlier pronunciation of the form.

⁽¹⁶⁾ See the detailed discussion of this complicated topic in J. BARR, *The Variable Spellings of the Hebrew Bible* (Schweich Lectures; Oxford 1989).

which as physical objects are far earlier in date than the Masoretic manuscripts, are more liberal in their use of such vowel letters, so suggesting that they reflect a later phase of the textual development at that point.

In the second place, however, the Masoretic Text has also been provided with vowel points and punctuation marks, which will mostly be retained in the proposed edition, even though they were added to the text many hundreds of years, and in some cases perhaps even as much as a thousand years, after the initial composition. In other words, even at this very basic level, the text of the Hebrew Bible is a composite, and this inevitably complicates the work of textual criticism in ways which it seems to me Hendel has not adequately addressed. We need to look at this a little more closely, therefore.

Hendel's stated aim in this new edition is to "approximate in its critical text the textual 'archetype,' by which I mean the 'earliest inferable textual state'"⁽¹⁷⁾. Later he speaks similarly about reconstructing "the earliest or more original readings, approximating the archetype ... that generated the extant textual evidence" (p. 331) and about the point at which "the process of textual production became the process of textual transmission" (p. 332). Without going into detail about matters which he admits are unattainable, this clearly means that he is aiming for a form of the text that at least predates the Septuagint; there is no suggestion, as has occasionally been mooted elsewhere, of a text as it might have been at the time when the New Testament was written, which certainly approximates far more closely to the stabilized text which became the Masoretic Text⁽¹⁸⁾.

Given that aim, which of course is quite uncontroversial, one would suppose that the *Oxford Hebrew Bible* would be an unvocalized text with as near as can be approximated archaic spellings. But in fact this is far from the case. Hendel here appeals to the work of Greg, a textual critic of English Renaissance literature, to introduce a distinction between "the 'substantive' readings, i.e. the sequence of words, which are the focus for the textual critic, and the 'accidentals', matters such as spelling and punctuation, which pertain to form or

⁽¹⁷⁾ HENDEL, "Oxford Hebrew Bible", 329; the words he cites are from E. J. KENNEY, "Textual Criticism", *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th edn; Chicago, IL 1984) XVIII, 191.

⁽¹⁸⁾ See, for instance, B.S. CHILDS, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia, PA 1979) 84-106.

presentation and are more susceptible to scribal revision in all ages”⁽¹⁹⁾. Hendel uses this distinction to justify effective ignoring of issues of spelling, vocalization and punctuation. They become merely part of his “copy-text” which will be reproduced unless there is reason for change. And so what we find is that we effectively have a reprint of *Leningradensis* but that where for good reason a variant reading or emendation is preferred, the word or words appear in an unvocalized form.

Apart from obvious possible objections that this results in a totally un-unified text, which seems contrary to the very notion of a critical edition, I believe that more fundamentally it glosses over serious issues which arise from the fact that the so-called copy-text is itself the combination of linguistic levels that are as much as a millennium apart. The two examples I shall now give to illustrate this may seem relatively minor for most purposes, but the ignoring of them is to reflect a deep failure to understand the nature of the texts we are dealing with and hence the very fundamentals of the text-critical enterprise.

(i) There are instances where there is good reason to suppose that the vocalization is mistaken even though the consonantal text is sound. In some cases, at least, the mistake may have been deliberate, as a device to cover over what later orthodoxy found theologically difficult, but this is not always so. A nice example where precisely this explanation is possible but not certain, occurs at Isa 7,11. Inviting king Ahaz to ask for a sign from God in order to help him trust the divine promise, Isaiah says, according to an unidiomatic rendering of the Masoretic vocalization, “Ask a sign from the Lord your God; make a request deep or make (it) high upwards”. This just about makes sense, though one would at least have expected a suffix on “request” so as to read “your request”. This, at any rate, is how most of the main versions took it. Symmachus, Theodotion and Aquila, three important later Greek recensions (to which Hendel does not refer at all, so far as I can see), however, translated the word “request” by “to Hades” (εἰς ᾅδην), evidently presupposing an alternative vocalization: הַלְטָה in place of הַלְטָה ; the Vulgate is in agreement: *in profundum inferni*. In view of the much better parallel phrasing which results, this has for long been adopted by nearly all commentators and translations; cf. NRSV: “let it

⁽¹⁹⁾ HENDEL, “Oxford Hebrew Bible”, 343, with reference to W.W. GREG, “The Rationale of Copy-Text”, cited from a reprint edited by J. ROSENBLUM, *Sir William Wilson Greg. A Collection of his Writings* (Lanham 1998) 213-228

be deep as Sheol or high as heaven”⁽²⁰⁾. I am sure this is right, and it may be that the Masoretes wanted to avoid the possible implication of imprecating the dead, forbidden by Deut 18,9-14. So far as I can see, however, this alternative reading of the ancient consonantal text can only be mentioned in the apparatus of the new edition because of the policy of adopting the Masoretic vocalization as the base-text and altering (and then leaving unpointed) only the consonantal text. This is one area where the inappropriate adoption of the base-text device from a linguistically rather different milieu is obvious. Examples could be multiplied, of course⁽²¹⁾.

(ii) At a more fundamental level, there are some instances where the Masoretic vocalization betrays a development in the Hebrew language itself which gives rise to forms which could not have existed in Biblical times. These are again not apparent in the consonantal text, of course, and they do not show up in the versional translations either. Yet in a critical text which seeks to reconstruct an archetype they should certainly be changed, but apparently cannot be according to the Project’s prospectus.

In a special study of this very phenomenon, Jeremy Hughes has explained and illustrated this matter with several examples⁽²²⁾, and more could be added to his list⁽²³⁾. Some of the examples are inevitably somewhat intricate and so unsuitable for discussion here⁽²⁴⁾, but one is

⁽²⁰⁾ In addition to standard commentaries on Isaiah, see especially BARTHÉLEMY, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament*, 46-47 (noteworthy because of this work’s generally extremely conservative attitude towards MT).

⁽²¹⁾ An odd example of this relates to the very first word in the Hebrew Bible. There has been a great deal of discussion over the spelling of this word, and there is minor evidence, of the sort that the new edition ignores, for alternative vocalization. But in *Genesis 1-11*, 121, HENDEL reproduces MT with no comment. Thus, even though we may agree that in fact there is no need to entertain any change at this point, his system appears not to allow someone consulting his edition even to realize that there is a disputed issue here that deserves discussion.

⁽²²⁾ J. HUGHES, “Post-Biblical Features of Biblical Hebrew Vocalization”, *Language, Theology, and the Bible*. Essays in Honour of James Barr (eds. S.E. BALENTINE – J. BARTON) (Oxford 1994) 67-80.

⁽²³⁾ See, for instance, BARR, *Variable Spellings*, 77-81; S.E. FASSBERG, “The Movement from *Qal* to *Pi‘el* in Hebrew and the Disappearance of the *Qal* Internal Passive”, *HS* 42 (2001) 243-55; A. SÁENZ-BADILLOS, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Cambridge 1993) 73-74; Y. BLOCH, “From Linguistics to Text-Criticism and Back: *wayyiqtol* Constructions with Long Prefixed Verbal Forms in Biblical Hebrew”, *HS* 48 (2007) 141-170.

⁽²⁴⁾ These relate in particular to (i) the probable overlooking of various forms of the infinitive absolute (a form which did not survive into later forms of Hebrew)

straightforward and can illustrate the principle adequately. In one class of verbs, the feminine singular participle and the third person feminine singular perfect of the simple stem are written identically; the only difference is that the former has the accent on the final syllable and the latter has it on the penultimate syllable. There are several passages, however (Gen 18,21; 46,27; Isa 51,10; Job 2,11; Ruth 1,22; 2,6; 4,3), where a form accented as a perfect by the Masoretes follows the definite article, a construction not known in Classical Hebrew. These seem to be examples of conformity to later linguistic practice by the Masoretes, but since they are attested only by the accents they will not show up in the text of the new edition.

b) Problems Concerning Textual Archetypes

From these examples of problems for the new edition arising from the mixed linguistic nature of the proposed base-text I turn secondly to a problem inherent in the nature of seeking for an archetype of the text of the Hebrew Bible. In some cases the evidence indicates that this is at least a reasonable aspiration; however much the textual witnesses may vary one from another, they remain indicative of a single line of textual tradition which in theory could be worked out. In a number of other cases, however, this appears not to be the case, and this raises unusually interesting questions.

The most famous example concerns the book of Jeremiah. Here, as has long been known, the Greek translation in the Septuagint is approaching 20% shorter than the Hebrew text, and in addition some of the chapters occur in a different order. While in the past it could in theory (though against the usual state of affairs) be argued that the shorter text was the result of the work of the translator⁽²⁵⁾, some very small fragments among the Dead Sea Scrolls now demonstrate adequately that the translation was based on a Hebrew original⁽²⁶⁾.

That being so, we have to conclude that there were two versions or editions of Jeremiah in circulation in the pre-Christian centuries.

as revealed by the statistically large number of defectively spelt forms of the imperfect hiph'il, (ii) the revocalization of qal passive forms as niph'als and (iii) the addition of the definite article in a number of unexpected situations.

⁽²⁵⁾ So, for instance, K.H. GRAF, *Der Prophet Jeremia erklärt* (Leipzig 1862) xl-lvii.

⁽²⁶⁾ J.G. JANZEN, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (HSM 6; Cambridge MA 1973); E. TOV, in E. ULRICH *et al.*, *Qumran Cave 4, X: The Prophets* (DJD 15; Oxford 1997) 171-176 and 203-205. It should be noted that proto-Masoretic fragments of Jeremiah were also preserved at Qumran.

Although they each have their own integrity, they also overlap in sufficient measure to conclude that one probably developed from the other or at the least from a common ancestor which closely resembled one version or the other. It is thus a reasonable question to ask which was the earlier. The answer of most scholars today would be that the version which underlies the Greek translation came first and that the version which became the Masoretic text developed from it or from something very like it⁽²⁷⁾.

If this view were shared by the editor of Jeremiah in the *Oxford Hebrew Bible* (Eugene Ulrich), and if he were working strictly according to the ways in which a classical text is edited, he would then presumably have to base his critical edition on the Septuagint, for which only very slight fragments in Hebrew from Qumran have also survived. The result would be that for this book, at least, the Hebrew text would be almost entirely a retroversion from the Greek (unvocalized, of course, since the vowels had not been added when the translation was made). This would be an extremely interesting scholarly exercise, but whether it would be appropriate in an edition calling itself the Bible is something on which opinions could well differ. However secure the retroversion (and the fact that so much is parallel to MT gives the exercise a greater degree of plausibility than might otherwise be the case) it seems to me questionable to present the results of what is inevitably scholarly acumen in this manner. It is material for commentaries, monographs and articles rather than a Bible text.

But what will in fact happen in this case? Fortunately, we have both Hendel's answer as editor of the edition and also a sample of Ulrich's work to examine. The answer is that "[a]nalysis of the Qumran texts in relation to the other major versions ... has made it clear that numerous portions of the Hebrew Bible circulated in multiple editions in the Second Temple period. The OHB aims to produce critical texts of each ancient edition, which will be presented in parallel columns"⁽²⁸⁾. While

⁽²⁷⁾ The recently presented view of Lundbom that some 64% (no less than 330 passages) of the material peculiar to MT was lost by haplography in the transmission of the text which the translator into Greek worked with seems inherently implausible; even a very careless scribe could hardly be expected to have made the same type of mechanical error so very frequently; cf. J. R. LUNDBOM, "Haplography in the Hebrew Vorlage of LXX Jeremiah", *HS* 46 (2005) 301-320, and see too his three-volumed commentary in the Anchor Bible series (New York 1999-2004).

⁽²⁸⁾ HENDEL, "Oxford Hebrew Bible", 326.

accepting the hazardously hypothetical nature of aspects of this programme, Hendel maintains that it will be a valuable resource for scholars, who do not otherwise always have ready access to this material in one place.

However much we may agree with aspects of this, the results as presented are astonishing, for we find that the column purporting to have the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Greek text is printed, wherever it runs parallel with MT (which is mostly the case), as a fully vocalized and punctuated text. Only those words or phrases which are judged to differ from MT are printed unpunctuated⁽²⁹⁾. This policy seems to me to be grossly irresponsible. Not only does it fall foul of all the remarks already made above about the problems of confusing two historical levels within the text, but in this case it further compounds the problem by presenting a text which we know simply never existed. This cannot be explained away as a matter of accidentals since it is not preserving as a perhaps unfortunate necessity some inherited aspect of the text. It is deliberately to present to those who probably are not able to make the distinction (scholars, it may be hoped, will be exempt from this danger) a purported critical text which cannot have ever been in existence.

A further problem concerns a number of the other texts which it seems will be treated in this same manner. Although for Jeremiah we at least have a complete Septuagint text, it seems from his remarks that Hendel intends that many other texts which happen to appear in variant forms at Qumran will be treated in the same way. But in these cases we have only very slight and partial evidence of what the texts were, so that the presentation is in danger of being misleading simply because so little of the material survives, and in addition it is far from clear whether we are in a position to judge whether these texts were really Biblical texts in the first place. The title is arguably anachronistic in any case, but it calls for fine judgment whether the material was regarded by any community as scriptural or whether it was rather liturgical, anthological, orientated towards study only, or whatever. Furthermore it is difficult to judge whether an addition made for whatever reason in a single manuscript can be said to constitute part of a Biblical archetype (though it remains to be seen how the editors will actually handle such cases)⁽³⁰⁾. In my opinion this policy of parallel

⁽²⁹⁾ The same applies to the sample of 1 Kgs 11,1-8 as presented by Joosten, so this is clearly the policy of the project as a whole.

⁽³⁰⁾ Cf. Tov, "Hebrew Scripture Editions", 305.

presentation runs more risks than it solves in terms of a critical edition of the Bible. To repeat my earlier remarks, however, I remain intrigued to see what our learned colleagues will produce from a narrowly academic point of view.

c) The Likely Reception of the New Edition

This distinction brings me to the final area where some reservations about this project may be expressed. Hendel claims as the first advantage of an eclectic text that it leaves the judgment about textual questions to the experts rather than to “the reader, who is often innocent of the discipline of textual criticism”⁽³¹⁾. That seems rather to raise several considerations that require further thought. First, the number of those who use any form of critical edition of the Hebrew Bible is relatively limited, simply because of the language requirement. Of those that do, some may be wedded to a conservative textual approach for religious or similar reasons, and they would be likely either to use another edition or to pick out the unemended text of their choice without full understanding of the issues anyway. This view may be unduly pessimistic on my part, but given the scale of the textual issues involved, as we shall see in a moment, I am sceptical about the ability of the production of this edition seriously to remedy the position.

To this pragmatic argument of Hendel, therefore, I strongly incline to the view that commentary is a more appropriate form of presentation. The new edition will include commentary, of course, and that is to be greatly welcomed, for this is where the expertise of the editor really comes into view and where he or she can lay out the evidence and the issues it raises in a manner that will be intelligible to Hendel’s hypothesized type of reader in far the best way. Crawford’s extended presentation of the problems of Deut 32,5 (pp. 355-356), for instance, makes clear that there is a range of versional evidence, that previous scholars have come up with a variety of proposed solutions, which are helpfully summarized, and then her own preferred solution is presented with justifying arguments. These include stylistic considerations from the wider context as the consideration of first importance (a subject which cannot be included in a strictly textual apparatus). This leads to the adoption of a plural form of the verb, for which the versions are cited, though of course with the exception of the

⁽³¹⁾ HENDEL, “Oxford Hebrew Bible”, 325.

Samaritan Pentateuch that is precisely a subject which cannot be at all certain, for they were more or less bound to render as plural even if their Hebrew *Vorlage* was singular, so that the apparent battery of textual support is actually far weaker than might appear. Crawford then defends a Masoretic word-order against the unanimous contrary impression given by all the other witnesses to the text, and finally she conjecturally deletes a word even though she admits that its presence in the text is supported by every single textual witness.

Now in presenting this summary, my purpose is not to discuss whether Crawford's conclusions are correct but to give an indication of the several procedures necessary for textual criticism in relation to the Hebrew Bible which are simply incapable of being properly presented in a textual apparatus of the conventional sort. The length of time of scribal transmission before we arrive at complete texts in our possession, the fact that most of our other complete witnesses are translations, and the difficulties quite often of knowing whether the problems we face are textual or, in fact, philological (given our far from perfect knowledge of Classical Hebrew), together with the fact already stressed that the texts we have inherited combine forms of the language as much as a thousand years apart, conspire to make textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible a rather different exercise from that of most other extensive texts which have reached us at second hand from antiquity.

Because of this, the processes involved certainly include the choices between separate textual witnesses of a conventional nature, but they do not, and I would say they cannot, stop there, so that any attempt to produce a critical text as though the exercise were the same as, say, for the text of the New Testament is seriously misleading. As we have seen, it shields from the view of the inexperienced reader precisely the judgments of the scholar which are most determinative in arriving at his or her conclusions. Hendel's first argument in favour of his project thus seems to me to deconstruct itself in practice.

This brings us secondly to an aspect of textual criticism which is usually rightly mentioned by commentators but whose force is perhaps not adequately understood at this particular juncture. Although textual criticism follows certain well-established guidelines and has various principles or rules which should always be considered, the fact is that there is an inevitable subjective element which means that scholars will almost always disagree with one another at this point or that. This affects the publication of all critical texts and is not by any means an

argument against them. In the case of the Hebrew Bible, however, the history of scholarship is sufficient to demonstrate that the differences between scholars on this ground both over time and within any single period of time are far more extensive than in other fields. Several factors help account for this, and they can only be briefly mentioned, since in principle each requires a full study to itself.

(i) In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, critical scholars had little more fresh primary data available to them than had been known for many centuries. The versions were effectively the same as had been available previously, and the riches of Arabic as well as post-Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic had long since been exploited by medieval Jewish scholars from whom, at several removes, the Christian community relearned its Hebrew in later centuries⁽³²⁾. Therefore when a difficulty was encountered in the text which modern thinking did not allow to be solved by traditional methods, the only alternative in most cases was to emend the text, either with reference to the versions, or, as often as not, conjecturally. Many commentaries from that period thus favour emendation to a much greater degree than is common nowadays, though some suggestions made then have in fact been vindicated by more recent discovery and others have been widely adopted as representing the most reasonable solution to the problem. At the same time, however, other commentators, perhaps more cautious or conservative than their colleagues, were far more reluctant to go down this route and still preferred — and indeed added to — explanations by way of internal grammatical, semantic or comparative methods, even though these often seemed rather exceptional.

(ii) During the twentieth century the knowledge of previously “lost” Semitic languages was recovered — principally Akkadian and Ugaritic. While work on these languages may have originally been inevitably somewhat uncertain, it has now reached an element of maturity where it may be used sometimes to illuminate passages in the Hebrew Bible that were previously obscure and so had to be emended. This method too, however, has been used sometimes to excess⁽³³⁾, as a

⁽³²⁾ There were exceptions to this generalization, of course. Scholars such as J. D. Michaelis and W. Gesenius certainly sought to bring new light to bear on Hebrew lexicography from the other Semitic languages then known to them, but their approach was not standard at the time.

⁽³³⁾ An important contribution, which (contrary to some scholars’ statements) was not opposed to the philological approach in principle but which sought to bring some degree of order and balance to the research in question, was J. BARR, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford 1968).

result of which some scholars have tended to ignore or belittle it, but as tends to be the way of such matters some proposals have become part of the accepted fabric of our work. Here too, however, there remain wide differences of opinion in terms of degree. The importance of this for textual criticism should not be overlooked, however, especially in view of the fact that this is often evidence of a pertinent nature which may have already been forgotten by those responsible for our earliest additional evidence, such as the translators of the Septuagint. The result of these circumstances is that there remains to this day a considerable divide among scholars as to the relative weight to put on philological conjecture and textual alteration⁽³⁴⁾, a topic which again cannot be indicated in the production of a critical text alone.

(iii) A final consideration is the new evidence, already mentioned previously, of the impact of the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Of the many topics which could properly be mentioned under this heading, it must suffice to observe that here we now have Hebrew texts of parts of the Bible which pre-date our manuscripts of the Masoretic text by about a thousand years, that on the one hand we cannot but marvel at how similar the consonantal text is in many cases, but equally that there are important examples here of textual pluriformity which create both opportunities and challenges to the textual critic. This is probably the factor above all others which has stimulated scholars such as Hendel to believe that we now have the means at our disposal to prepare an eclectic critical text. At the same time, however, caution needs to be expressed about the way these texts are sometimes cited in such discussions. Many of the texts have survived in only an extremely fragmentary state, so that it is quite misleading to imply that we now have a fresh antique form of witness to the whole Bible; in many cases it applies to only a small fraction. Secondly, and partly in consequence of this, it is equally uncertain that all the fragments which are considered to be Biblical texts really were so. As already mentioned, Biblical text may be used in many different sorts of composition, including liturgy, anthology, study material, extracts, and so on. Indeed, voices have been raised even in regard to some of the more substantial scrolls, such as the Psalms Scroll, to question their

⁽³⁴⁾ For an interesting personal reflection by a pupil on the difference in Oxford's Oriental Institute in just this regard between Professor H. Danby and Professor G.R. Driver, see J.A. EMERTON, "Comparative Semitic Philology and Hebrew Lexicography", *Congress Volume, Cambridge 1995* (ed. J.A. EMERTON; VTS 66; Leiden 1997) 1-24.

genre. This does not detract from their value for textual criticism, but it raises important questions about *how* they should be used in that work. And thirdly, I have already mentioned previously the difficulty in particular of discerning the status of modest-sized fragments with specific variations from the MT, such as harmonization, added material and changes of order; were these ever regarded as scriptural, or should some be differently evaluated? I should not for a moment wish to be misunderstood: the importance of the Scrolls for textual criticism is paramount and I do not want to deflect attention from that. But what I should insist on is that precisely that use demands a careful consideration of other factors than the solely textual, so that again it is commentary rather than a new textual edition which seems to me to be the first requirement⁽³⁵⁾.

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In conclusion, the announcement of the forthcoming publication of the *Oxford Hebrew Bible* draws our attention once again to the ongoing debate about how best to publish the Hebrew text. The new work will be of great interest and value, and the quality of the scholarly team ensures that we shall learn a great deal of value from it. I for one will certainly scour it in the greatest detail in order to learn from those whom I respect highly in this field.

Nonetheless, as I have sought to indicate here, it raises problems for me as a project which lead me to regret its adoption as a purported Bible text from a publishing house which commands respect. It shows a sorry lack of understanding about the fact that our text is a linguistic hybrid which makes this enterprise flawed from the start. Its form of presentation only aggravates that problem, since against its stated objectives it will not present anything remotely resembling an eclectic edition of a supposed archetype. And finally it fails to take into account the ways in which the textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible inevitably differs from that of most other texts, leading, I fear, to further confusion on the part of those who are not already well versed in the subject. In the present state of knowledge, as well as in the light of the

⁽³⁵⁾ I should make clear that appreciation of the complexities of the textual evidence at our disposal does not necessarily rule out the possibility (to which I adhere) of an *Urtext*, however difficult that may be to reconstruct in practice. The issues are helpfully presented and discussed by Tov, *Textual Criticism* (2nd edn) 164-80.

extraordinary range of diversity of opinion in this field, what is required is full and sober textual commentary. I have no doubt that that aspect of the project will be welcomed and widely used; but it is not a Bible, new or old.

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SUMMARY

The launch of the *Oxford Hebrew Bible* has recently been formally announced and examples of its work published. Unlike nearly all current scholarly editions of the Hebrew Bible, it aims to provide an eclectic rather than a diplomatic text. There are many aspects of the underlying reasons for this which should be approved. Nevertheless, as a project it has certain inherent weaknesses. It completely overlooks the different linguistic levels which are amalgamated in the Masoretic Text, so that its policy of maintaining the current spelling and vocalization are misguided. It also fails in its stated objective of providing a textual archetype in those cases where different editions of the text may be thought to have circulated in antiquity. And many of the most crucial decisions at the text-critical level are not included in the apparatus at all but in the commentary; indeed, in view of the unique textual nature of the MT as well as the variety of scholarly opinion about its textual history it is commentary rather than a new edition which would best serve the needs of the prospective readership.

Acts 28,28 — Why?

Acts 28 tells a story of Paul's encounter with certain Jewish leaders⁽¹⁾ in Rome. After a day of explaining Jesus through the use of the Jewish Scriptures, Paul watches these and still other Jews disperse, discontent among themselves as to the truth of Paul's exegesis of the Jewish scriptures in relation to the Kingdom of God and the 'things' of Jesus. As Paul sees them go, he, apparently in anger⁽²⁾, cites Isaiah to the effect that those who do not accept his preaching have hardened their hearts, closed their eyes and ears; they did this so that (with the result that) they should not understand⁽³⁾ and turn back (to God), who is assuredly ready to heal. Upon the close of this quotation, used by Paul (and Luke) to show why certain Roman Jews did not accept Jesus as the Jewish Scriptures intended they should⁽⁴⁾, Luke gives further words to Paul⁽⁵⁾. Thus, v. 28, and not the citation from Isaiah, closes Paul's reflection on the response of certain Jews to his preaching. This fact, in turn, suggests that we look closely at this v. 28 so as to better

(1) Throughout this essay we will insist on the clarity of Luke that he so orders his story that we are to think that the object of Paul's remarks in Acts 28,26-27 are 'certain Jewish leaders'; note the indefiniteness of the number: ἦλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν...πλείονες (v. 23). (In this regard, 28,28 is similar to 13,46, where again there is no affirmation that 'all Israel' is the object of Paul's criticism and/or decision). There is no visible attempt to freshly apply the Isaiah citation to the 'people of Israel'. Thus, though Isaiah speaks of "say to this people", the Pauline application intended is, from context, not all Israel, but 'certain Jewish leaders'.

(2) That Paul speaks with emotion is not a reason to think that Luke reports Paul's words with the same emotion. Luke, despite his adjustments with the historical nature of events, cannot be said to 'be angry' because Paul is shown to 'be angry' (if anger truly describes Paul at this moment).

(3) In accord with Acts 5,31, this 'refusal to understand' involves the rejection of μετάνοια and subsequent forgiveness of sins that God intended for Israel.

(4) This citation from Isaiah offers no argument or evidence that Israel is now condemned or abandoned by God; consequently, this citation can hardly be called the 'final Lucan word' about Israel. It emphasizes that the attitude which describes the unbelieving Jewish leaders in Rome is well illustrated by Isaiah's words to 'their Fathers'; there is no mention here of the people Israel.

(5) "28 ist Fazit in Lukanischer Diktion", H. CONZELMANN, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (HzNT 7; Tübingen 1963) 160.

appreciate why it, and not the Isaian citation⁽⁶⁾, completes Paul's thought and reveals his true intention here.

1. Acts 28,28 – important elements

Most all elements of this verse are important: “therefore”, “you must know”, “this salvation”, “was sent”, “to the nations” — “and they will listen”. They yield, we will argue, a conclusion that Paul attempts to motivate his fellow Jews to conversion.

First of all, v. 28 is a logical conclusion (οὖν) to the citation from Isaiah. To Paul's way of thinking, v. 28 follows in some logical fashion from the facts of that citation. Something should be gained, in other words from the statement of the Spirit about “your fathers”, words which Isaiah is to direct “to the people” and which are now applicable in turn to the disagreeing Jews of Rome⁽⁷⁾.

What is to be gained from the Isaiah citation is knowledge, and it is imperative⁽⁸⁾ that Paul's listeners (ὑμῖν) learn: “you must know”. The knowledge necessary for these Jews to know is expressed: God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles. Thus, the attitude expressed by Isaiah and applied to certain members of his audience by Paul must result in, or be followed by this audience's knowing, apparently for the first time, the fact that divine salvation has been offered to the Gentiles.

⁽⁶⁾ Cf. A. WEISER, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (ÖTBK; Göttersloh 1981-1985) II, 683: “Nach Auffassung der meisten Exegeten bringt Lukas am Schluss — anders als Paulus Röm 9–11 — zum Ausdruck, dass sich die nicht an Jesus glaubenden Juden selbst ausserhalb Israels gestellt haben... Mit der Umkehr Israels als des gesamten Götesvolkes rechnet Lukas nicht mehr”. However here WEISER does not exclude, “der Umkehr einzelner Juden”, 683. WEISER represents the thinking of earlier exegetes about Acts 28,26-27, but each “...mit unterschiedlichen Akzenten z. b. Conzelmann (*Die Mitte der Zeit*, 177); Eltester (*Israel*, 124f.); Gnllka (*Verstockung*, 143; 149f); Haenchen (*Apg*, 112 [allerdings zu einseitig: “die christliche Mission seiner Zeit wendet sich nur noch an die Heiden”]); Jervell (*Israel*, 71); Lohfink (*Sammlung*, 93); Prast (*Presbyter*, 329); Roloff (*Apg*, 375); Schneider (*Apg*, II 420); Wilson (*Gentiles*, 226-233, 251) 683-684”.

⁽⁷⁾ E. HAENCHEN, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen 1959) 647-648: “...damit wird hier (wie in 13,48, 18,6) der Übergang der rettenden Verkündigung von den Juden zu den Heiden begründet”; but nowhere in his commentary does Haenchen explain why this past fact is told to this limited number of Jewish leaders in Rome, who are confronted with the Pauline preaching only now. Later, we will show differences between 28,28 and the earlier 13,48 and 18,6.

⁽⁸⁾ γνώστων οὖν ἔστω is a formula used elsewhere in Acts by Luke (Acts 2,14; 4,10; 13,38); he means thereby to indicate emphasis and new knowledge.

The clause which describes this knowledge is signalled by ἀπεστάλη, whose most prominent feature, as far as this essay is concerned is its tense, the aorist tense. The use of this time element means that in consequence of the applicability of Isaiah words to Paul's audience, this audience should now know something that has happened in the past⁽⁹⁾. In addition to the tense of this verb we note its theological significance and its voice. In regard to the former, the meaning of ἀποστέλλω in Luke's work conveys the divine origin and forceful direction of salvation to human beings; salvation offered by Paul is removed from Paul's domain⁽¹⁰⁾ and placed clearly where it belongs, in the mind and will and heart of God. In regard to the latter, there is no doubt that Paul means to emphasize the divine sending by use of the divine passive. Most important, however, is the tense of this verb, which indicates that Paul's audience is to know, given their own attitude, something about the past⁽¹¹⁾.

The term τὸ σωτήριον is rarely used by Luke. Yet, its contexts relate to this Acts passage. Luke 2,30⁽¹²⁾ and 3,6 are the only texts, but each of them signals reference to people beyond Israel. John the Baptist, interpreted by Isaiah, is to so preach as to allow all flesh to see the salvation of God. No doubt, when these words are applied to John, they refer to all Israel; but the context of Luke suggests that behind this effort of John is to be seen the wider, indeed widest offer of salvation, that to the nations, a preaching to the end of the earth. In Luke 2,30, Simeon traditionally divides the world into two groups, Israel and the Gentiles. Each of these in its own way will know the salvation of God. Thus, in these two short texts, Luke asks his reader to be aware of the universal nature of the salvation God has offered mankind; thus, in this way Luke prepares us for the completion of these prophecies: "God's salvation" has been sent to "the Gentiles".

⁽⁹⁾ "...the commissioning had already taken place", R.C.H. LENSKI, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Columbus, OH 1944) 1130.

⁽¹⁰⁾ As well, from every other human being's control.

⁽¹¹⁾ With regard to the tense of ἀπεστάλη and the message of this verb, we note the comment, "Und es ist nicht ein Ergebnis der Wegerung des ungläubigen Judentums", J. JERVELL, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (KeKzNT 3; Göttingen 1998) 629; cf. also B. WITHERINGTON, *The Acts of the Apostles. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI 1998) 806: "...not turning from the Jews to the Gentiles".

⁽¹²⁾ "The formula [τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ] may be a borrowing from Isa 40:5 (LXX)... quoted in Luke 3:6", FITZMYER, *The Acts of the Apostles* (AB28A; New York 1985) II, 796.

The salvation of which Paul speaks is from God, but is also “this” salvation. “This” salvation most likely refers back to the day-long Theological and Christological discussion when Paul witnessed to Jesus from the Law of Moses and the prophets (v. 23)⁽¹³⁾. This demonstrative adjective has v. 23 as its closest referent. It is a salvation that has to do with Jesus that has been sent to the Gentiles, and it is this salvation that Paul’s audience, in view of its attitude, must be made to know.

From all that has been said, it is clear enough who are the recipients of this salvation that God has sent. All of Acts keeps us keenly aware of these recipients, as well as the struggle to bring salvation to them. Given the affirmation of v. 28, and earlier statements of Jesus and of Acts, there is no doubt of the divine intention that salvation be offered both to Jew and Gentile, with no suggestion, in the phrasing of v. 28, that salvation has been sent to the Gentiles only after it was refused by Israel⁽¹⁴⁾. As is clear from Luke’s presentation in limited, chosen sections of Acts, salvation came “first to the Jew”. But generally the Gospel and much of Acts presents the divine intention of σωτήριον in what we might call simple parallel fashion: “... Your salvation which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,... to the Gentiles and... to your people Israel” (Luke 2,30-32); “my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1,8). Actually, it is only with the narration of Paul’s mission to the Gentiles, beginning in Acts 13, that “to the Jew first, then to the Gentile” becomes a literary and theological principle⁽¹⁵⁾. Acts

⁽¹³⁾ However, “Das Demonstrativum zeigt, das an ἰσόμοι (V 27)... angeknüpft ist... Dies übersieht Hauser ..., der an einen Rückverweis auf 28,23b denkt. Eher könnte man auf alles verweisen, was das Lukanische Werk über σώζω, σωτήρ, σωτήρια κτλ bisher gesagt hat”, G. SCHNEIDER, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (HTkZNT 5.2; Freiburg 1982) II, 419, n. 87.

⁽¹⁴⁾ “J. Dupont ha messo in luce che la missione presso i gentili non dev’essere intesa come una conseguenza del rifiuto dei giudei. Questo rifiuto come pure l’entrata dei pagani nella chiesa sono visti come compimento delle Scritture: ‘I due fatti non si spiegano dunque l’uno mediante l’altro, ma l’uno e l’altro a partire dal disegno di Dio manifestato dai profeti’ [“La conclusion des Actes...”, *Les Actes des Apôtres*, a cura di J. Kremer (Gembloux 1979) 403]”, G. Rossé, *Atti degli Apostoli* (Roma 1998) 887.

⁽¹⁵⁾ It is clear that the plan of God, executed in the first instance by Jesus and then by his witnesses, moves from Israel to ‘the end of the earth’, but this pattern is never, until Paul’s time, expressed in terms of “to the Jew first, then to the Gentile”, or better, “to the Gentile only after refusal from the Jew”. Luke 14,23, “Go out to the highways and hedgerows and make people come in”, may seem to

28,28 follows the usual Lucan practice that speaks only of salvation to Jews and Gentiles.

2. Acts 28,28 in regard to Acts 13,46 and 18,6

Often in regard to the movement “first to the Jew, then to the Gentile”, Acts 28,28 is placed as the third of a triad of texts; the first two texts are Acts 13,46⁽¹⁶⁾ and 18,6. But these two texts differ from Acts 28,28, precisely because of implications from the aorist tense ἀπεστάλη. The Jews of Acts 28 are to learn a past fact, not a fact which merits the present tense⁽¹⁷⁾ or future action. Too, these two texts speak directly of Paul’s personally turning from Jew to Gentile; Acts 28,28 does not describe a personal decision of Paul, but has to do with information that it is necessary for these Jews to know. Finally, whereas in Acts 28,28 there is the assurance that the Gentiles ‘will listen’⁽¹⁸⁾, there is no such concern with the stories of Acts 13 and 18⁽¹⁹⁾. Indeed, these observations regarding Acts 13,46 and 18,6 underline how different Acts 28,28 is from them, and thereby suggest a peculiar meaning for this last verse⁽²⁰⁾.

refer, by virtue of Lucan creativity, to the Gentiles, but such a reference is not clear, nor is it clear that Jesus thought in the manner of the banquet host of the parable (14,15-24).

⁽¹⁶⁾ At Acts 13,47, Paul cites Isaia 49,6: “I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth”. Note that the point of the quotation is not to emphasize “first to the Jew, then to the Gentile”, but only movement to the end of the earth. The essence of the mission is to fulfil the saving will of God; that it happens “first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” is secondary.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Misguided is the opinion: “But the book of Acts is at an end, and so is the cycle [alternating pattern of rejection and mission]”, J. SANDERS, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (SCM; London 1987) 299.

⁽¹⁸⁾ In the usual Lucan sense of ‘listen favorably’ or ‘will obey’ (Lk 5,1.15; 8,8.21; 9,35; 10,16; 11,28; 14,35; 15,1; 21,38; prob. 23,8; Acts 4,19; prob. 8,6; 9,21; 13,7.4.48; 15,7; 18,8.26; 21,20).

⁽¹⁹⁾ Instructive is the presentation of Peter in Acts, in the sense that nowhere is rejection of his preaching by Jews the sign that he is now to turn to the Gentiles. Even when Peter, in paradigm fashion, goes to, preaches to and baptizes Cornelius, he is the passive, even unwilling instrument of God of the offer of salvation to the Gentiles. It is in the Pauline experiences, beginning with Chapter 13, that one first finds narrative expression of the principle, “To the Gentiles, because Jews have refused to believe”.

⁽²⁰⁾ “The importance (of the mission at Antioch) is underscored by the similar pattern of events found in later scenes (cf. ... 28:23-28)”, R. TANNEHILL, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis, MN 1990) II, 175.

3. Acts 28,28 — *its reason for being*

From the above, we ask what might be the purpose of Paul's final words captured in v. 28; another way of putting the question is to ask why it is necessary to have a conclusion (οὖν) to the Isaiah citation of vv. 26-27⁽²¹⁾.

The answer we suggest here is that v. 28 means to be a spur or incentive to the Roman Jews to repent so as to enjoy God's healing⁽²²⁾. This is the best explanation for the necessity of information to the effect that the Gentiles have already received the word of God about salvation. To what other purpose would such necessary information serve⁽²³⁾? Certainly we cannot confuse this verse with Acts 13,46 and 18,6. Each of these verses means to show a reason for Paul's movement to the Gentiles, and exhibits the Pauline teaching "first to the Jew, then to the Gentile"⁽²⁴⁾. Such is not the case at 28,28⁽²⁵⁾. The verse, and the preceding description of the heart, ears and eyes of

(²¹) These verses, even in the book of Isaiah, are not condemnatory. They seem to function as a kind of warning which is based on, and includes the revelation to, Israel of its true state in its relationship with God. The prophet is not satisfied to describe the negativity of Israel, but ends with the ever-present assurance that "I will forgive". As usual, both Israel and the mercy of God are revealed in prophecy. Paul does not waver from the intentions of Isaiah.

(²²) "Paul is asking the Jews [of Rome] whether they too would exclude themselves as those fathers of old had done. When even the Gentiles hear, will they fail to hear?", C.K. BARRETT, *The Acts of the Apostles* (ICC; Edinburg 1998) II, 1248.

(²³) If one supposed that vv. 26-27 did not address the Jewish leaders of Rome, but were a generalization of their refusal, then one might think that Paul is, with these verses, criticizing all Israel; then one would understand v. 28 to say that the past offer of salvation to the Gentiles flowed from the past refusals of Israel to accept "this salvation". However, vv. 27-28 are addressed to the Roman Jewish leaders, and only to them; thus, the logic expressed a moment ago fails.

(²⁴) Rom 1,16; 2,10: Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι. Though this formula is missing in Acts, its sense is clear in Acts 13,46 (ὁμῶς ἡν ἀναγκαῖον πρῶτον... ἰδοὺ στρεφόμεθα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη) and in 18,6 (καθαρὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν εἰς τὰ ἔθνη). As said before, this contrast is not visible in 28,28. It is not the purpose of this essay to veer from the ordinary understanding of Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι, but the phrase can be understood in such a way as to avoid the idea that the Gentile is evangelized only because of rejection of the message by the Jew.

(²⁵) It is difficult to accept the statement: "As before in Pisidian Antioch (13:46), Corinth (18,6), and Ephesus (19,8-10) so here again in Rome — and this time with a note of solemn finality — that henceforth the Gentiles will have priority in hearing the word of life and that, unlike the Jews as a whole, they will accept it", F.F. BRUCE, *The Book of the Acts* (NCINT; Grand Rapids, MI 1988) 509.

Roman Jews, does not lead to a movement to the Gentiles; that movement has already taken place, and without explanation. V. 28 means not to explain a Pauline decision of missionary tactic, but to offer a description of state of soul. And how would that knowledge of the past serve, if not as urging the Jews of Rome to repent?

4. Acts 28,28b — *wording and emphasis*

Verse 28 ends with the assurance: αὐτοί⁽²⁶⁾ καί⁽²⁷⁾ ἀκούσονται. The position of the wording suggests emphasis somewhere in the verse. Accepting the suggestion of NJB and NAB, that Luke is here intending “also”⁽²⁸⁾, we see Paul implying a possible association of the Jews with the Gentiles in a future acceptance of “this salvation from God”: “they too will listen”. But what purpose would this union of Jew with Gentile serve in Paul’s address to his audience? Certainly it is not to underline contrast, but serves to encourage the Jews to receive the message of salvation. Paul here is not offering a spiteful condemnation of Roman Jews; that type of thinking might be part of Acts 13,46 and 18,6⁽²⁹⁾, but Acts 28,28, as we have said, is not simply a third text in imitation of the two earlier texts of Acts 13 and 18⁽³⁰⁾. Acts 28,28b, then, can serve as part of the motivation Paul uses for a possible future reception of the word of God among the Roman Jews.

Indeed, this understanding makes the connection with Acts 28,30 smooth. Paul here is depicted as speaking to “all who came to him”; this notice is without distinction between Jew and Gentile, and offers

⁽²⁶⁾ That the subject of the verb in 28,28b is presumed from 28,28a is argument that the two parts of v. 28 are tightly bound one to the other, and so should be treated together, despite editorial semi-colons, hyphens and periods.

⁽²⁷⁾ This word has been variously understood and interpreted. A minimal understanding is as a simple connective of the two sentences that make up the verse; in this view, one either understands the word to mean: “and they will listen” ASV, NIV, or “they will listen” (with the καί untranslated) ESV, NRS, RSV, NJB, NAU. But the position of καί suggests that we have here a certain degree of emphasis, so as to mean: “they will also listen” NJB, NAB.

⁽²⁸⁾ It is possible to understand καί as the second part of the terms of contrast, the first part of which is implicit: “(you have rejected)... but they will listen”. This seems a less likely interpretation.

⁽²⁹⁾ For a discussion of these verses within their broader contexts, cf. R.F. O’TOOLE, “The Christian Mission and the Jews at the End of the Acts of the Apostles”, *Biblical Exegesis in Progress* (eds. J.-N. ALETTI – J.-L. SKA) (AnBib 176; Rome 2009) 387-388.

⁽³⁰⁾ These texts are clearly meant to underline Paul’s departure from certain Jews and so to offer the faith to certain Gentiles.

no refusal to talk to Jews who had already visited with Paul in 28,13-28⁽³¹⁾. Indeed, though clearly the final two verses serve as a closing summary, they do not wholly intend a separation in thought from what went before them, but rather suggest the possibility of continuity with these prior verses.

Verse 28,28 is informational; certain Jewish leaders are to learn what has happened in the past. However, we have said this knowledge has a purpose beyond that of information: it is meant to spur them on to repentance. But is it reasonable to expect that news of salvation already sent to the Gentiles was thought to inspire, exhort repentance? There are two examples to offer in which we can see an emphasis on an urging to repentance, one from Paul and one from Jesus.

5. Acts 28,28 in relation to Rom 11 and the Gospel of Luke

Rom 9–11 is a somewhat tortuous reflection on the loss of Israel and what its ultimate, final state will be before God. This reflection involves the baptism of the Gentiles, a factor which was very visible in Paul's time and indeed an object of his dedicated preaching. In this three-chapter discussion Paul offers a remark which is very much to the heart of this present essay. At Rom 11,11-12 he says, "What I am saying is this: Was this stumbling to lead to their final downfall? Out of the question! On the contrary, their failure has brought salvation for the gentiles, in order to stir them to envy"⁽³²⁾. This text strongly shows that many years prior to the writing of Acts there had been placed in the tradition the thought that the transgression of Israel should eventually serve as a spur to Israel's repentance and acceptance of "this salvation". It would not be surprising, then, to read in Acts a continuation of this same kind of purpose following upon criticism of Israel⁽³³⁾.

⁽³¹⁾ FITZMYER, *Acts*, 797 affirms that πάντας (Acts 28,30) "is almost certainly to be understood as 'all individuals' (so DUPONT, "La conclusion", 376-380; SCHNEIDER, *Apg* 2.419-20; GNILKA, *Verstockung*, 154)." Granted that the fuller phrase πάντας τοὺς εἰσπορευομένους πρὸς αὐτόν can only be understood as referring to individuals (Jew or Gentile), the above comment seems unnecessary, unless it means to say that Luke is here admitting to an abandonment of Israel as a people — an affirmation we do not find expressed in Acts 28.

⁽³²⁾ Cf. Rom 10,19: "I shall rouse you to jealousy with a non-people" (εἰς τὸ παραζηλώσαι αὐτούς).

⁽³³⁾ It is noteworthy that in Rom 11,8 "Scripture says: God gave them a spirit of stupor, blind eyes and deaf ears" and in 11,10: "David says: Let their eyes be darkened so that they may not see". Thus, not only does Paul speak of Israel's

At one point on his journey to Jerusalem Jesus was asked if there are few who will be saved (13,23). Jesus does not answer in terms of 'many' or 'few', but, as was his wont, uses the question to offer salvific teaching. He begins, and this is notable for the rest of his words, with an exhortation: "Try to come in through the narrow door" (13,24). Jesus continues with a parable which focuses finally on those who thought they had every reason to obtain salvation, but will not. At the conclusion of the parable he assures his audience that, they will see Jews and Gentiles safe in the Kingdom of God, "and you yourselves rejected" (v. 28). Now, one can understand Jesus' remarks as those of the Lord, dominical or revelatory or prophetic sayings, but given the context of exhortation, it is more correct to see these sayings as an urging to repentance and acceptance of "this salvation". In other words, the dramatic statement of Jesus, which is informational, surely serves as warning, and so as urging to "enter through the narrow door". Again, the pattern we find in Acts 28,28, information leading to repentance, is evidenced, now in the Gospel of Luke.

5. The content of Acts 28,28 in the context of Jesus' mission

Thus, should one look to the greater context of the Lucan work, he will find that Luke shows an ever-present interest in motivation towards repentance, even when the material is presented in dominical saying form, or, as we have said, in informational form. The public life of Jesus, according to Luke, has two purposes, one subordinate to the other. The central reason for his life before condemnation, death and resurrection is expressed, "(To other towns) I must announce the good news of the reign of God, because that is why I was sent" (4,43). Crucial, theologically laden terms here are εὐαγγελίσασθαι με δεῖ... ἐπὶ τοῦτο ἀπεστάλην; 'necessity' and passive form of ἀποστέλλω, which terms place the entire works of Jesus' public life within the loving will and determination of God. This description of the role of Jesus repeats the essence of what he had said in Nazareth: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to announce a year of favor from the Lord" (4,18-19). Indeed, another formula of the same idea occurs in 16,16: ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγελίζεται.

jealousy (παραζηλώσαι) at the divine acceptance of Gentiles, but he also prefaces this with quotations which resemble the citation Luke offers in Acts 28,28. Indeed, Luke 24,47 is clear that the overall goal of Christian preaching in Acts is μετάνοια εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.

The secondary or subordinate purpose of Jesus' public life is expressed in the second part of 16,16: καὶ πᾶς εἰς αὐτὴν βιάζεται⁽³⁴⁾. The better expression of this role of Jesus occurs within a confrontation with certain Pharisees and Scribes (Luke 5,30-31). To them Jesus says, "I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners". This call to repentance, which is the "urging" in the word βιάζεται' is related to the divine pleasure "because he has fixed a day when the whole world will be judged⁽³⁵⁾ in uprightness by a man he has appointed. And God has publicly proved this by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17,31).

Given the theological understanding of the plan of God in Luke-Acts, it is difficult not to see in most all of what Jesus says and does calls, encouragements to repentance so as to pass the Final Judgment and enter into the Kingdom of God. Here is found the good news that Jesus offers to Israel. It is doubtful that Luke would have changed Jesus' emphasis on encouragement to repentance, once Luke moved into the story of Acts. On the contrary, one reads Acts with this Gospel reality in view. It seems more logical to read 28,28 against the tendency of Luke to offer encouragement to repentance⁽³⁶⁾. Paul himself had expressed a goal for his life identical to that of Jesus: "...to open eyes... to turn from darkness to light, from dominion of Satan to God, that... they may obtain forgiveness of sins and a portion among God's people" (Acts 26,18). This speech before Agrippa is written as a final reminder of the essence of Paul's work, and so the expression within it of Jesus' reason for sending Paul is of the greatest importance. If, then, Paul knew his role to be that of one to motivate to repentance, it seems best to understand 28,26-28 under this same rubric.

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The remarks of Paul to departing Jewish leaders (finally widened to πλείονες) in Rome lead up to, and conclude with a sentence introduced by οὖν; it is also an expressed (though third-person)

⁽³⁴⁾ The sense of the verb βιάζεται is best understood as "being strongly encouraged"; Jesus has this as his daily purpose. Cf. the comment of FITZMYER, Acts, 1117, who cites others in support of this interpretation.

⁽³⁵⁾ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ὁρισμένος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ κριτὴς ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν.

⁽³⁶⁾ Cf. Acts 5,31; also, "To the very end Paul remains faithful to the Lord's calling to bear witness to both Jews and Gentiles...Neither Jewish rejection nor Roman imprisonment prevents him from preaching 'with all boldness' in response to this call", TANNEHILL, *Narrative Unity*, II, 352.

command. The full sentence is addressed to a limited audience, even if the Isaian citation leading up to it is addressed, centuries earlier, to the larger group, to “this people”⁽³⁷⁾. What this Pauline audience is to know is an event expressed as already begun⁽³⁸⁾, an event, therefore, which does not begin with these Jews’ refusal⁽³⁹⁾ of Jesus (“this salvation”), nor can they be said to know of this event before Paul’s words in 28,28. Literarily and theologically the moment of Jewish refusal is not, as in 13,46 and 18,6, what leads to a preaching to the Gentiles; preaching to the Gentiles has already begun long before Paul arrives in Rome. The question, then, is ‘of what value is this information to Paul’s audience’? The best answer, one which coincides with the overall context of Luke-Acts, is that knowledge of the preaching of salvation, already underway, from Israel’s God to the Gentiles should spur the present audience to repentance and belief⁽⁴⁰⁾. From this perspective, Acts 28,26-28, a speech ordered to repentance and faith, is not a condemnation or abandonment of Jews; it means to lay bare the evil of hearts and eyes and ears closed to the truth, in the hope that one might take stock of oneself and respond positively to the God who promises, “I will heal you”⁽⁴¹⁾.

Thus, Theophilus, to whom Gospel and Acts are written, understands not only how it came about that he received the offer of

(37) Differently: “...estas palabras de Pablo en v. 25-28 son válidas para todos los judíos y difícilmente se limitan exclusivamente a los de Roma”, M. BENÉITEZ, *Esta salvación de Dios (Hech 28,28)* (Madrid 1986) 387.

(38) Peter’s second Jerusalem speech (Acts 3,11-26) is not only ‘witness’ (in line with Acts 1,8), but is predominantly a speech of exhortation, filled with motives for repentance, not the least of which (in contrast to Peter’s Pentecostal speech) is a way of seeing Jesus’ death as an act brought about κατὰ ἄγνοιαν (3,17). All that Peter says is aimed here at the urging μετανοήσατε (3,19).

(39) While it is true, as Luke remarks, that οἱ μὲν ἐπείθοντο τοῖς λεγομένοις, it also true that Luke cannot here announce the baptism of any of Paul’s hearers; thus, we do not confuse persuasion with belief. Another example of those who hear favorably, but still lack baptism and so fall short of faith, is found in Acts 19,1-7.

(40) Cf. J. DUPONT, *La Sainte Bible. Les Actes des Apôtres* (Paris, 1964) 220: “Paul souhaite que cette docilité des Gentils soit un stimulant pour les Juifs: cf. Rm 10,19; 11,11.14”.

(41) We have noted the speech meant to turn hearts to repentance in Acts 3,13-26. A speech which apparently does not mean to cause conversion is that of Stephen in Acts 7. Even the Pentecostal speech of Peter in Acts 2, though in itself does reveal evil but calls for no conversion, shows its fuller role to persuade in the verses immediately following it: τί ποιήσωμεν, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί? and the response μετανοήσατε.

faith in Jesus, but the continual offer of salvation to πάντας, Jew and Greek alike.

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SUMMARY

The Isaian citation, used by Paul to describe his encounter with certain Jews in Rome, does not stand alone: it leads to a conclusion, a conclusion which is an imperative and an assurance. What is commanded is a knowledge of the plan of God already in motion, a plan to offer salvation to Jews and Gentiles. As information for Jews of Rome, this final word of Paul is best understood as a motive for repentance; knowledge of the divine plan of God, which will succeed (28b), serves as an encouragement to Roman Jews to 'turn and be healed by Me'.

Melchizedek in Hebrews 7

In the OT, the priest-king Melchizedek is only mentioned in Ps 110,4 — perhaps in the Hebrew text, definitely in the Greek text (LXX Ps 109,4)⁽¹⁾ — and briefly in a narrative about Abraham in the Pentateuch (Genesis 14). In the latter narrative, Melchizedek suddenly appears, before then equally suddenly disappearing from the OT narratives altogether.

The letter to the Hebrews, however, has more to say about this priest-king Melchizedek. It offers information going beyond the literal meaning of the OT passages mentioning him.

In the last century or so, several early texts, all having in common that they mention a figure with the name Melchizedek, have been either discovered or made available to a scholarly audience — above all the Melchizedek document from Qumran, the Nag Hammadi tractate with the name Melchizedek and the Melchizedek legend in 2 (Slavonic) Enoch. They all portray Melchizedek as a semi-divine figure — which also is the case with the presentation of Melchizedek in Hebrews. The question has therefore risen: How should one understand Hebrews in light of these discoveries?

The letter to the Hebrews presents itself as a “word of exhortation” (Heb 13,22), written, probably with the purpose of being read aloud, by an anonymous author to an anonymous congregation. This lack of data makes it difficult for us to outline the historical and theological context into which the writing was originally written and read.

Nevertheless, judging from the many quotations the author makes from the OT and from the words he addresses directly to the recipients of the letter, one can for a start draw two conclusions. Firstly, the author was well-versed in the Scriptures. As is evident in several places, he used a Scripture written in Greek — more or less identical with what

⁽¹⁾ In my PhD thesis which was defended publicly in December 2008 I argue that מלכ־צדק in Ps 110.4 originally probably was a nominal clause. See G. Granerød, “Abraham, Melchizedek and Chedorlamomer: An Attempt to Read Genesis 14 as the Work of Scribal Activity in Second Temple Times” (unpublished PhD thesis; MF Norwegian School of Theology, Oslo 2008) 205–225.

one usually refers to as the LXX⁽²⁾. Secondly, the congregation he was addressing consisted of Christians who according to Heb 6,1 had already received a basic teaching about Christ (6,1 τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον). The author's intention was not to lay the foundation (θεμέλιον) anew⁽³⁾.

The author strongly urges the recipients to seek "perfection" (τελειότης). "By this time", the author says in Heb 5,12, the recipients ought to be teachers — which however they are not. He holds against them that they still need milk, not solid food. This, however, means that they are still unskilled (ἄπειρος) and infants (νήπιος, v. 13). In opposition to this, he continues, "solid food [ἡ στερεὰ τροφή] is for the mature [τέλειος]" (v. 14).

In the context of Hebrews, what the author refers to as "solid food" for the mature is the Christology particularly characteristic of Hebrews — the view that Jesus is a priest in heaven.

1. *The Sacerdotal Christology Characteristic in Hebrews*

The Christology evident in Hebrews is made up of at least two pillars⁽⁴⁾. The first one is broadly attested in the rest of the NT literature as well, namely the idea that Jesus is God's son. The second pillar, however, is the view that Jesus is a high priest who once for all sacrificed himself (Heb 9,26) and who "always lives to make intercession" (Heb 7,25).

The latter, sacerdotal Christology, is characteristic of Hebrews. In the entire NT, the idea that Jesus continues to pray for those who believe in him — and does so after his resurrection and ascension to heaven — is found only a handful of places⁽⁵⁾. In Rom 8,34, Paul explicitly connects Christ's heavenly intercession with a Christological interpretation of Ps 110,1: "... It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us". In other words, Paul assumes that Yahweh in the first oracle of Psalm 110 is addressing Jesus. The words "Sit at my right hand ..." (Ps

⁽²⁾ E.g., using LXX Ps 109,4 and paraphrasing LXX Gen 5,22 in Heb 11,5.

⁽³⁾ Neither with respect to the necessity of "repentance from dead works and faith toward God", baptism, the resurrection of the dead, nor eternal judgment.

⁽⁴⁾ See e.g., L. GOPPELT, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (UTB 850; Göttingen 1976) 580. — Here, I will briefly also point to the fact that Hebrews considers Jesus as Christ. Moreover, Jesus is spoken to as God (cf. Heb 1,8).

⁽⁵⁾ D.M. HAY, *Glory at the Right Hand*. Psalm 110 in Early Christianity (SBLMS 18; Nashville, TN 1973) 130-134.

110,1) are thought to be spoken to Christ. The first known Christian martyr, Stephen, probably made a similar association between Christ's standing at the right hand of God and his intercession, just before he was stoned (Acts 7,55-56). In addition, we perhaps find the intercession of Jesus being connected to his sitting on the right side of God in 1 Pet. 3,21-22.

Even though Jesus is not frequently called "a priest" in the NT, the author of Hebrews probably takes over traditions already existing when expounding the priesthood of Christ. However, what sets Hebrews apart from the other NT texts is above all the particular emphasis in terms of narrative space given to this idea. The designations "priest" and "high priest" are used many times throughout Hebrews⁽⁶⁾. The question therefore arises: Why is it so important for Hebrews that Jesus is a "high priest"? One can approach this question in different ways. An attempt at an answer made on the basis of the history of theology of the early church is not unproblematic — in particular when the emphasis is on the chronological allocation of the various NT texts. Depending on the methods chosen and the data emphasized, the date of composition of Hebrews stretches from the beginning of the 60's to the year 96 or 97 CE⁽⁷⁾. It is therefore not easy to outline the chronological order of the NT texts depicting Jesus as "a priest" — including Hebrews. Nevertheless, it is a plausible assumption that there existed an early Christian tradition according to which Jesus was seen in this way — a tradition antedating Hebrews⁽⁸⁾.

A closer examination of the very opening of Hebrews (Heb 1,1-4) points in the same direction. According to many exegetes, the author opens Hebrews by somehow recalling a traditional, early Jewish-Christian hymn⁽⁹⁾. Despite the fact that Jesus is not termed "a priest" in either of these opening verses, he is described as having performed priestly functions. For according to 1,3a, Jesus "made purification for

⁽⁶⁾ With the exception of the many occurrences in chapter 7: Heb 3,1; 4,14-15; 5,1.5.6.10; 6,20; 8,1.3.4; 9,7.11.25; 10,11.21; 13,11.

⁽⁷⁾ See P. STUHLMACHER, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Göttingen 1999) II, 86-87. The *terminus ad quem* is due to quotations of Hebrews which might be found in 1 Clem 17,1; 36,2-5.

⁽⁸⁾ See e.g. GOPPELT, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 584.

⁽⁹⁾ STUHLMACHER, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, II, 92-93. Other scholars are more sceptical. As C.R. Koester puts it, "[t]he most that can be said is that Heb 1:3 includes traditional elements", cf. C.R. KOESTER, *Hebrews* (ABD; New York 2001) 179. See also A.C. MITCHELL, *Hebrews* (Sacra Pagina 13; Collegeville, MN 2007) 44-45.

sins” before he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty. The claim that the hymnic opening is not the work of the author of Hebrews is supported in various ways. First, the opening hymn offers the hapax legomena ἀπαύγασμα (“reflection”) and χαρακτήρ (“exact representation”)⁽¹⁰⁾. Neither of these words is exploited later on in Hebrews, despite their potential for the purpose of dealing with the pre-existence and incarnation of Christ⁽¹¹⁾. Further, the paraphrase of Ps 110,1 which we find in Heb 1,3, uses the term “Majesty”, not κύριος, the Greek counterpart of יהוה. This seems to reflect a typical Jewish tendency to avoid using the tetragrammaton. It therefore seems likely that the author in Heb 1,1-4 either opens his writing by means of an already existing hymn or by alluding to traditional hymnic elements. Although Christ is not called “a priest”, he is nonetheless *de facto* depicted as one — even before the composition of Hebrews. It seems that the author presupposes that the addressees of the writing are — or at least should be — acquainted with the idea of Christ as heavenly priest, sitting at the right hand of his Father and interceding for his people.

2. Typology

Before looking closer at chapter 7, a few words should be added about the way the author of Hebrews uses the OT. In many of the other NT texts, the Christian theologians interpret OT passages — including passages from the Torah and the book of Psalms — according to a prediction–fulfilment scheme. Typically, the OT passage in question is conceived of as offering a prediction which then accordingly is considered as having been fulfilled in the life and work of Jesus⁽¹²⁾.

Although not entirely absent, such a prophecy–fulfilment argumentation is not typical for Hebrews⁽¹³⁾. The author of Hebrews instead favours a typological scheme. Persons, institutions and events that the OT speaks of are seen as anticipations — dim shadows — of

⁽¹⁰⁾ Likewise, the phrase ἐν ὑψηλοῖς “on high” does not occur elsewhere in the NT.

⁽¹¹⁾ In Wis 7,26 wisdom is a “reflection [ἀπαύγασμα] of eternal light”. In *inter alia* Heb 1,2-3 we have proof for the concepts of pre-existence and incarnation being rooted in Jewish sapiential theology. See O. SKARSAUNE, *Inkarnasjon - myte eller faktum?* (Oslo 1988) 22-26 and O. SKARSAUNE, *In the Shadow of the Temple. Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL 2002) 325-330.

⁽¹²⁾ See e.g. John 19,31-37.

⁽¹³⁾ The author is acquainted with it though. See Heb 8,8-12.

realities which are either yet to come or which are already considered as a reality after Christ's suffering, resurrection and ascension to heaven. Thus, according to Heb 3,1-6, the faith of Moses foreshadows the faith of Jesus. According to 3,7-4,11, the disobedience shown to God by the generation wandering in the wilderness functions as a negative example (ὑπόδειγμα, 4,11) for the Christians. According to 8,2, the meeting tent and the sanctuary prescribed in the Torah was set up by mortals, the "true tent" (ἡ σκηνή ἢ ἄληθινή) however by the Lord. According to 9,1-10, the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly tent. Now, there is a new covenant for which Christ is the mediator (μεσίτης, 9,15). According to 9,25, the purification that the high priest performed on the Day of Atonement as prescribed in the old covenant (Leviticus 16) had to be repeated again and again (πολλάκις, 9,25). Now, on the contrary, Christ has appeared once for all (ἅπαξ) at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself⁽¹⁴⁾.

3. Outline of Hebrews 7 — Place in Literary Context

I will now turn to Hebrews 7. In this chapter, the sacerdotal Christology is thoroughly accounted for by means of typology. Melchizedek is presented as the antitype of Christ. Commentators often designate the entire chapter as a *midrash* — some sort of interpretation — on the Melchizedek material of the OT⁽¹⁵⁾. We should keep in mind that the author of Hebrews does not introduce any new hermeneutical method here. Rather, the Melchizedek-Jesus typology in Hebrews 7 should be understood in light of the overall typological pattern which I just outlined: in the eyes of the author, persons, institutions and events in the old covenant are to be considered as anticipations of the new covenant.

Before reaching chapter 7, the author of Hebrews has already briefly anticipated the typological relation between Melchizedek and Christ no less than three times. In Heb 5,5-6 he combines a quotation of

⁽¹⁴⁾ This is not the time and place to discuss the background of the dualistic concepts evident here. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that already in the Priestly source of the Pentateuch we find the idea that the (earthly) tabernacle and all its furniture are made by Moses according to the pattern (תבנית, LXX: παράδειγμα) revealed to him by Yahweh (Exod 25,9). See STUHLMACHER, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, II, 89-90.

⁽¹⁵⁾ H.W. ATTRIDGE, *The Epistle to the Hebrews. A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia, PA 1989) 186.

Ps 2,7 with LXX Ps 109,4 and argues that Christ “did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’; as he says also in another place, “You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek””.

Moreover, a few verses later the author claims that Jesus, having been made perfect in connection with his obedience on Calvary, became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him. In relation to this God gave him the designation “a high priest after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb 5,10). Finally, in Heb 6,20 — on the threshold of chapter 7 — the author claims that Jesus, “having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”, is a forerunner (πρόδρομος), on behalf of his believers, to the inner shrine behind the curtain.

This allusion to LXX Ps 109,4 is further developed in chapter 7, where the author for the first time also employs Genesis 14, the only other OT passage where the priest-king contemporary with Abraham is mentioned. Heb 7,1-3 read (NRSV):

This “King Melchizedek of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham as he was returning from defeating the kings and blessed him”; and to him Abraham apportioned “one-tenth of everything.” His name, in the first place, means “king of righteousness”; next he is also king of Salem, that is, “king of peace.” Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.

In v. 4, the author continues: “See how great he is! Even Abraham the patriarch gave him a tenth of the spoils.” The author then makes Abraham, who is Levi’s great grandfather, a representative of the levitical priesthood. By giving a tithe to the priest Melchizedek, the author says, Abraham — and through him all the levitical priests — at the same time recognizes the superiority of the priesthood of Melchizedek (7,4-10).

Moreover, in the second part of the chapter, in vv. 11-19, the author argues that the Levitical priesthood cannot attain perfection (τελείωσις). In addition, he also admits that Jesus does not have any priestly genealogy (v. 14). The author argues, however, that this does not matter, for he has not become a priest through the requirements of the Torah, according to which physical descent is necessary. Rather, Christ has become priest “through the power of an indestructible life” (v. 16). Yahweh’s oracle in LXX Ps 109,4 — which the author conceives of as addressing Jesus — results in the abrogation of the

earlier commandment (ἐντολή) of the Torah — because the latter was “weak and ineffectual” (v. 18).

In the third and last part of chapter 7 in vv. 20-28, the author elaborates further upon the characteristics of Jesus’ priesthood. His argumentation seems to be anchored in three points. First, by quoting the oracle in LXX Ps 109,4 for the fourth or fifth time, he focuses on the word “oath”. The other priests took their office without an oath — Jesus however became a priest with an oath, which moreover was spoken by the Lord himself. Second, by recalling the clause “You are a priest forever”, the author of Hebrews deduces that Jesus holds his priesthood permanently (ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην), because he continues forever (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). Third, according to the author, not only does this eternal priest always live “to make intercession” (v. 25), but he also, unlike the other high priests, has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people. For “this he did once for all when he offered himself” (v. 27).

4. *The Melchizedek Traditions Used by the Author*

It can be stated at once that the author of Hebrews bases his exposition in chapter 7 on at least two biblical sources. The first one is the oracle in v. 4 of LXX Psalm 109 — an oracle he quotes verbatim or alludes to no less than eight times in the entire letter. The second source is Genesis 14. It seems that he condenses Gen 14,17-20 — the story about Abraham’s successful return after having beaten the four kings and his subsequent meeting with Melchizedek. On the basis of what he actually finds written in these two sources, he explains the meaning of the name “Melchizedek” and the designation “king of Salem”. “Melchizedek” is said to mean “king of righteousness”, whereas “king of Salem” means “king of peace”, thus identifying the place name “Salem” with שָׁלוֹם, the Hebrew word for “peace”. Whether or not these proposals are “correct” according to the standards of modern linguistics is not the concern here. For the sake of simplicity I will point to the fact that etymological interpretations of names are found several times within the Hebrew Bible and continued in Hellenistic and rabbinic Judaism⁽¹⁶⁾. Therefore, the explanations offered by the author of Hebrews do not in principle represent anything unique.

⁽¹⁶⁾ See e.g. Num 21,3 where the name of the city Hormah (חֶרְמָה) is connected with the verb חָרַם “to put under ban”. As for the name Melchizedek, see e.g. Philo, *Congr.* 44-45, *All. Int.* 3,79 and Josephus, *War* 6,438, *Ant.* 1,181.

However, in Heb 7,3 it seems that the author departs from the information offered by the OT sources he uses.

The implication of this verse is that Melchizedek is no mere earthly figure. On the contrary, he appears as an immortal and perpetual priest (μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές) with a semi-divine status (μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων). The idea of Melchizedek's immortality reappears in Heb 7,8 — of Melchizedek it is "testified that he lives" (μαρτυρούμενος ὅτι ζῇ), contrasting the mortality of the descendants of Levi. Further, the assumption that Melchizedek is an immortal priest is crucial for the author's argumentation concerning the immortality of Christ and his perpetual priesthood (e.g., cf. 7,24-25).

5. *Hebrews 7,3.8 — Deduced from Extra-Biblical Sources or an Argument from Silence?*

From where does the author get the information evident in Heb 7,3? What made him refer to Melchizedek as without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life etc.?

For a long time exegetes have struggled with this crucial question. In short, the proposals have typically been made along two different paths⁽¹⁷⁾. On the one hand, it has frequently been pointed out that speculations about this shadowy figure of ancient past flourished in Jewish, Christian and Gnostic circles. Somehow, then, it is thought that the author is dependent on one — or several — of these speculations about Melchizedek⁽¹⁸⁾. On the other hand it has been argued that the author of Hebrews, in accord with Jewish hermeneutical techniques, simply utilizes a potential in the OT texts which he unfolds. In other words, it is argued that the author has made an argument concerning Melchizedek from silence.

First, I will focus on the assumption that Heb 7,3 reflects an already existing Melchizedek legend. From the second century BCE up till the medieval age, there are a number of sources which have in common the fact that they in one way or another are about Melchizedek⁽¹⁹⁾.

⁽¹⁷⁾ See e.g. ATTRIDGE, *Hebrews*, 187, 189-192; KOESTER, *Hebrews*, 338-343 and MITCHELL, *Hebrews*, 141-144.

⁽¹⁸⁾ So e.g. HAY, *Glory*, 153.

⁽¹⁹⁾ For a survey of the references to Melchizedek, see F.L. HORTON, *The Melchizedek Tradition. A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (SNTSMS 30; Cambridge 1976) and B.A. PEARSON, "Melchizedek in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Gnosticism", *Biblical*

In the Gnostic sources, Jesus and Melchizedek are identified, both being transcendental figures. These sources, however, are most likely later than Hebrews. More important, the identification is based on Heb 7,3.

Among the Nag Hammadi texts discovered in Egypt in 1945 there is an apocalypse attributed to a Melchizedek who receives revelations and is identified with Christ (*NHC IX,1: Melchizedek*). The tractate is dated between the second and fourth century CE. The identification of Melchizedek with Christ is based on Heb 7,3⁽²⁰⁾. As for the other Gnostic texts dealing with Melchizedek — and a transcendent Melchizedek for that matter (e.g. the *Bala'izah fragment, The Second Book of Jeu, Pistis Sophia*, books 1–4) — the “problem” with them is also their relatively late date — regardless of whether or not one can find traces of Hebrews in them.

In the rabbinic literature a human Melchizedek appears. In the targums, midrashim and in Talmud he is identified with Shem, one of the sons of Noah⁽²¹⁾. Although Melchizedek is an antediluvian figure, he is nonetheless human throughout. All the rabbinic sources are probably later than Hebrews.

For the historian Josephus, Melchizedek is a thoroughly human figure — he is seen as a Canaanite and the first one to have built a temple (*Bell.* 6,438). Apart from this information, Josephus does not add much to the biblical texts except for some etymological interpretations of Melchizedek and Salem (*Ant.* 1,180).

Philo of Alexandria died 50 CE. Thus, his works antedate Hebrews. At one point he interprets Melchizedek as the divine *Logos*⁽²²⁾. This may — or may not — imply knowledge of a Jewish tradition ascribing divine or semi-divine status to Melchizedek. However, this cannot be said with certainty — Philo sometimes

Figures outside the Bible (eds. M.E. STONE – T.A. BERGREN) (Harrisburg, PA 1998) 176–202. Moreover, see also the excursus on Melchizedek in ATTRIDGE, *Hebrews*, 192–195; M. McNAMARA, “Melchizedek: Gen 14,17–20 in the Targums, in Rabbinic and Early Christian Literature”, *Bib* 81 (2000) 1–31 and J.J. PETUCHOWSKI, “The Controversial Figure of Melchizedek”, *HUCA* 28 (1957) 127–136.

⁽²⁰⁾ PEARSON, “Melchizedek”, 193.

⁽²¹⁾ *Targ. Ps.-J., Targ. Neof., Frag. Targ.* on Gen 14,18; midrashim: *ARN* 2; *Gen. R.* 43,1; 44,7; Talmud: e.g. *b. Ned.* 32b. Moreover, see V. APTOWITZER, “Malkisedek: Zu den Sagen der Agada”, *MGWJ* 70 (1926) 93–113.

⁽²²⁾ *Leg. all.* 3,82 ἵερεὺς γὰρ ἐστὶ λόγος, “For reason is a priest”.

interprets the Bible *ad hoc* and sometimes picks up current Jewish traditions in his works⁽²³⁾.

In the 2 (Slavonic) Enoch 71–72 we find a fully-fledged nativity narrative concerning Melchizedek. In short, Melchizedek is reported to have been conceived in mysterious ways without man's contribution. His mother Sopanim, who is sterile, dies and out of the corpse the Melchizedek child comes, already wearing priestly insignia and fully developed physically, like a three-year old child. The husband of Sopanim and the child's stepfather, Nir, is Noah's brother. Before the great Flood, the archangel Michael takes the Melchizedek child to Paradise where, it is said, he will be priest to all holy priests (2 En. 71,28–29). "In the last generation", however, there will be "another Melchizedek" — apparently a mortal version this time because it is reported that he will be buried (2 En. 71,35–36). It is intriguing to speculate whether or not the tradition about the "first" — and heavenly — Melchizedek of 2 (Slavonic) Enoch has some relevance for explaining the background of the immortal Melchizedek who appears in Hebrews⁽²⁴⁾. Unfortunately, the textual situation of 2 (Slavonic) Enoch is complicated. No manuscripts of this pseudepigraphic work written in Church Slavonic earlier than the fourteenth century are known. Yet today it seems that experts in the field, despite certain Christian interpolations, date its composition to the first century CE and even before 70 CE, the year that Titus destroyed Jerusalem⁽²⁵⁾. Nevertheless, in my view, the textual situation alone makes it very difficult to draw any conclusions regarding a possible relation to Heb 7,3.

⁽²³⁾ PEARSON, "Melchizedek", 181. Moreover, see P. BORGES, "Philo of Alexandria as Exegete", *A History of Biblical Interpretation* (eds. A.J. HAUSER and D.F. WATSON) (Grand Rapids, MI 2003) I, 114–143. — In any case, Philo understands the name Melchizedek to mean βασιλεὺς δίκαιος "righteous king", cf. *Leg. All.* 3,79.82.

⁽²⁴⁾ So C. BÖTTERICH, "Hebr 7,3 und die frühjüdische Melchizedeklegende", *The Bible in Cultural Context* (eds. H. PAVLINCOVÁ – D. PAPUŠEK) (Brno 1994) 63–68.

⁽²⁵⁾ BÖTTERICH, "The Melchizedek Story of 2 (*Slavonic*) Enoch: A Reaction to A. Orlov", *JSJ* 32 (2001), 445–70; BÖTTERICH, "Die vergessene Geburtsgechichte: Mt 1–2/Lk 1–2 und die wunderbare Geburt des Melchizedek in slHen 71–72", *Jüdische Schriften in ihrem antik-jüdischen und urchristlichen Kontext* (eds. H. LICHTENBERGER – G.S. OEGEMA) (Studien zu den Jüdischen Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit 1; Gütersloh 2002) 222–248 and F.I. ANDERSEN, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) ENOCH (late first century)", *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. J.H. CHARLESWORTH) (AB Reference Library; New York 1983–1985) I, 91–222 (94–95).

I have not yet mentioned the *Melchizedek* document from Qumran. 11QMelch is an exegetical work⁽²⁶⁾. The OT idea about the year of Jubilee found in Leviticus 25 is interpreted as an eschatological release of the captives of Belial, who is the lord of the spirits of darkness. Due to the fragmentary nature of the document, the details are not entirely clear, but in any case Melchizedek is Belial's antagonist. As part of the redemption, the released ones will be freed from "their iniquities" (עוונותיהם, 11QMelch 2,6). Moreover, "atonement" (כפר) shall be made for the "men of the lot of Melchizedek" (11QMelch 2,8). Nowhere in 11QMelch is Melchizedek called "a priest". Nevertheless, both the removal of iniquities and atonement are usually related to priestly activities. Be that as it may, 11QMelch probably does identify Melchizedek with the אֱלֹהִים of Psalm 82 — here probably with the meaning "angel, heavenly being"⁽²⁷⁾. The document quotes Ps 82,1: "*Elohim* will [st]and in the assem[bly of God,] in the midst of the gods he judges" (11QMelch 2,10). 11QMelch does not quote Genesis 14 nor Psalm 110. However, 11QMelch is a work that bases itself heavily on biblical material⁽²⁸⁾. It is therefore unlikely that the author came up with the character of Melchizedek independently and without knowledge of these two biblical texts⁽²⁹⁾. Summing up so far, 11QMelch thus portrays a Melchizedek who probably is a priest and definitely is a transcendental, eschatological and judgemental figure with access to the heavenly courts.

There are probably some additional references to Melchizedek in

⁽²⁶⁾ A. ASCHIM, "Melchizedek the Liberator: An Early Interpretation of Genesis 14?", *SBL* 35 (1996) 243-258; A. ASCHIM, "The Genre of 11QMelchizedek", *Qumran between the Old and New Testaments* (eds. F.H. CRYER – T.L. THOMPSON) (JSOTSup 290; Sheffield 1998) 17-31; A. ASCHIM, "Verdens eldste bibelkommentar? Melchizedek-teksten fra Qumran", *TTK* 2 (1995) 85-103 and P.J. KOBELSKI, *Melchizedek and Melchireša'* (CBQMS 10; Washington, DC 1981) 3-5.

⁽²⁷⁾ For alternative proposals, see A. ASCHIM, "Melchizedek and Jesus: 11QMelchizedek and the Epistle to the Hebrews", *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism. Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus* (eds. C.C. NEWMAN – J.R. DAVILA – G.S. LEWIS) (JSJSS 63; Leiden 1999) 129-147 (133-135).

⁽²⁸⁾ See e.g. G.J. BROOKE, "Melchizedek (11QMelch)", in D.N. FREEDMAN (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York 1992) IV, 687-688 and G.L. COCKERILL, "Melchizedek or 'King of Righteousness'?", *EvQ* 63 (1991) 305-312.

⁽²⁹⁾ KOBELSKI, *Melchizedek and Melchireša'*, 51 n. 8. — According to Kobelski, the similarities between Psalm 110 and 11QMelch are too numerous and too basic to the interpretation of each document to be coincidental.

the literature from Qumran. In 4Q401 (Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice), fragment 11, line 3 has been restored to read “[... Melchi]zedek, priest in the assem[bly of God ...]”. Moreover, it is commonly assumed that Melchizedek is present in 4Q543-548 (4QVisions of Amram^{a-f}) as the antithesis to Melchiresha”, “king of iniquity”, who appears as the spirit of darkness in these very fragmentary texts (cf. 4Q544 2,3-5)⁽³⁰⁾. Except for the Melchizedek references evidently found in 11QMelch and possibly also in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and 4QVisions of Amram^{a-f}, no other pre-Christian references to a figure called Melchizedek are found — if we set aside Genesis 14 and Psalm 110, as well as the Genesis Apocryphon, from Qumran (1QapGen), which I do not comment upon here.

Palaeographically, 11QMelch is datable to the early first century CE or more likely to the late first century BCE⁽³¹⁾. The question therefore arises: is the author of Hebrews somehow dependent upon the Melchizedek document/ documents from Qumran? The fragmentary nature of the Melchizedek document and the other texts of course makes it difficult to analyse them. Nevertheless, in light of what actually is possible to say about them — and in particular 11QMelch — the most likely answer is in my view no.

The notion found in Hebrews that Melchizedek is “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life” (7,3) and that it is “testified that he lives” (7,8) does not contradict what is actually said about Melchizedek in 11QMelch. But although Melchizedek probably is a priest in the Qumran documents⁽³²⁾, the function of the Melchizedek of 11QMelch is quite different from that of the Melchizedek found in Hebrews. In the *Melchizedek* document from Qumran he has an eschatological, clearly redemptive role. In contrast, in Hebrews he above all functions as the antitype of Christ. In the latter text he has no independent significance for salvation.

Therefore, it does not seem that the author of Hebrews makes any clear allusions to the Melchizedek speculations evident in the Qumran

⁽³⁰⁾ Dated to the second century BCE, cf. KOBELSKI, *Melchizedek and Melchireša*’, 25. — A figure called *Mechiresha*” also occurs in 4Q280 (*Curses against Melchiresha*) 1,2, dated to the first half of the first century BCE, cf. KOBELSKI, *Melchizedek and Melchireša*’, 37.

⁽³¹⁾ KOBELSKI, *Melchizedek and Melchireša*’, 3.

⁽³²⁾ Despite the lack of such a characterization except for the restored one found in 4Q401 11,3.

texts. There are no indications that he had direct access to, say, a composition related to the one we know today as 11QMelch.

In principle, another explanation is possible, namely that the theologians at Qumran on the one hand and the author of Hebrews on the other — independently of each other — are dependent on a common Melchizedek tradition — a tradition which, then, has more to say about this figure than what is found in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110⁽³³⁾. If that is the case, the author of Hebrews has found such a tradition useful for his cause — namely to develop the idea that Christ, sitting at the right hand of God (Heb 1,3), is a priest who has made “a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people” (Heb 2,17) and continues to intercede (Heb 7,25). Above, I argued that there are reasons to believe that the author did not invent the idea about Christ being a priest. It was probably already part of Christian tradition.

Nevertheless, I will argue that one should consider another explanation — instead of positing some kind of “*Legendenkranz*” related to Melchizedek⁽³⁴⁾. Although the author of Hebrews uses a Greek text of the OT, he nevertheless employs various Jewish hermeneutical techniques. Here, I will give a brief survey of them⁽³⁵⁾. I have already mentioned typology, which I consider to be the most dominant one in Hebrews. In addition, the author of Hebrews (1) expounds the text on the basis of the literal meaning of the text (e.g. Heb 1,7; 9,20). (2) He also occasionally interprets according to a prediction–fulfillment pattern (e.g. Jer 31,31–34 [LXX 38,31–34] → Heb 8,8–12). (3) He employs allegorical method, finding spiritually important content hidden in the literal meaning of the text (Num 12,7 → Heb 3,2.6). (4) He makes deductions *a minori ad maius* in a way comparable to the later Rabbis (Heb 9,13–14)⁽³⁶⁾. (5) He makes analogical deductions on the basis of two or more texts that he consider to be connected to each other due to common catchwords or common contents (*gezerah shawah*, catchword “rest” in Ps 95,11 [LXX 94,11] + Gen 2,2–3 → Heb 4,3–5).

Is it possible to explain the surplus information that we find in Heb

⁽³³⁾ So e.g. ASCHIM, “Melchizedek and Jesus”, 129–147 and recently also T. ELGVIN, “Sixty Years of Qumran Research: Implications for Biblical Studies”, *SEA* 73 (2008) 7–28 (26, referring to Aschim).

⁽³⁴⁾ So e.g. BÖTTERICH, “Hebr 7,3 und die frühjüdische Melchizedeklegende”, 67.

⁽³⁵⁾ See e.g. STUHLMACHER, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, II, 90.

⁽³⁶⁾ Also present in the teaching of Jesus, cf. Matt 10,29–31.

7,3.8 concerning Melchizedek as the result of the author's use of a certain hermeneutical technique? Methodologically, one should give priority to an explanation made on the basis of the hermeneutical techniques that the author of Hebrews seems to be using elsewhere in his writing. The alternative, the assumption that he somehow is dependent upon current traditions about a semi-divine Melchizedek, cannot be excluded. However, such presumptions unfortunately cannot be checked⁽³⁷⁾. We do not have access to the library which the author of Hebrews had at his disposal. And — we do not know precisely what oral traditions he was familiar with.

However, it is noteworthy that the author explicitly makes arguments from silence in both Heb 7,14 and 7,20. In the former verse he states that "... it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests." A few verses later in 7,20, referring to the oracle in LXX Ps 109,4 which he understands as spoken to Jesus, he argues that "This was confirmed with an oath; for others who became priests took their office without an oath...".

My argument is that it is quite likely that the author of Hebrews in 7,3.8 in a similar way has "exploited" a potential already present in the Melchizedek texts of the OT. For, as he already made clear in Heb 5,6,10 and 6,20, it is essential for him that Jesus is a "(high) priest according to the order of Melchizedek", in accordance with LXX Ps 109,4. In this oracle which is so important for the author, there is an additional phrase: the priesthood granted to Jesus is said to be

(37) ASCHIM, "Melchizedek and Jesus", argues that Hebrews makes use of a Melchizedek tradition that is very similar to the one in 11QMelch. The arguments are given in *ibid.*, 136-143. For instance, on p. 140 it is said that the Yom Kippur motif found in both 11QMelch and Heb 9,7 provides "a point of contact that cannot be directly derived from the biblical Melchizedek passages [in Gen 14,18-20 and Ps 110,4], an important indication of a shared tradition beyond that contained in the biblical texts." In my view, however, the "Yom Kippur-argument" as well as the other arguments Aschim puts forward to prove that 11QMelch and Hebrews both draw upon a common Melchizedek tradition, are not persuasive. The (relatively few) similarities with regard to Melchizedek can be explained differently. The author of 11QMelch on the one hand and the author of Hebrews on the other have both — independently of each other but using the same Scriptures and comparable hermeneutical methods — come up with a comparable, but by no means identical, result. The fact that the Day of Atonement ritual plays a role in both texts says more about the high esteem for the Yom Kippur rituals in various branches of Judaism than it says about a common Melchizedek tradition upon which 11QMelch and Hebrews draw.

“forever” (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). If Jesus is to be “a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”, it might have been obvious to the author that Melchizedek’s priesthood is eternal also. And if Melchizedek is a perpetual priest, it follows that he does not have any parents, does not belong to any priestly family nor has any end of life.

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* *

When all is said and done, the Melchizedek speculations in Hebrews should be put in context. These speculations do not represent the theological core of this writing. Rather, they are part of an argumentation with a clearly Christocentric purpose: to portray Christ as the “Son of God”, who in addition is a heavenly high priest. From his position at the right hand of God, this heavenly priest is interceding for his people. As David Hay puts it, Melchizedek is mentioned to demonstrate the reality and superiority of the priestly office of Jesus. He is not related to the priestly work of Jesus. After Heb 7,17 he drops out of sight altogether⁽³⁸⁾.

The roots of the idea about Christ as a heavenly priest are probably earlier than the letter to the Hebrews. However, the author of Hebrews did not necessarily make use of earlier extra-biblical speculations about Melchizedek. Rather, he may have come up with the concept about a semi-divine Melchizedek simply by using the great “tool box” of hermeneutical techniques which was common to many Jewish groups, including that of making arguments from silence.

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SUMMARY

Hebrews has more to say about Melchizedek than what is said about him in LXX Ps 109,4 (perhaps also MT Ps 110,4) and Genesis 14. Heb 7,3 says that Melchizedek is “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life” and that “he remains a priest forever”. I discuss where the author gets this information from. Methodologically, priority should be given to an explanation made on the basis of the hermeneutical techniques that the author uses elsewhere. I argue that the surplus information found in Heb 7,3.8 stems from arguments made from silence. The author explicitly makes arguments from silence in Heb 7,14.20.

⁽³⁸⁾ HAY, *Glory*, 153.

A Letter of Recommendation?

A Closer look at Third John's "rhetorical" Argumentation(*)

One might wonder how and why the third epistle of John made it into the canon of the New Testament. It certainly does not appear to have any particular theological relevance. Nevertheless, this very short document is an important witness to the difficulty experienced by the first (Johannine) house-churches as they defined and shaped their mutual relations⁽¹⁾. As Houlden suggested, one could imagine that third John

...may have survived either because of early association with an apostolic figure, or because of its peculiar value to men in position to preserve it. In the latter case, we may suppose that the quarrel to which it bears witness ate deep into the heart of the Johannine church and that the memory of it was preserved in its annals long enough for the former factor to begin to play an important, if not necessarily undisputed, part⁽²⁾.

The letter, which appears to be a personal one, and not intended to be read before a congregation⁽³⁾, is sent by "the Elder" to Gaius (v. 1). The fact that the Elder does not need to specify his name probably indicates that Gaius knew him⁽⁴⁾. As a common Roman name, Gaius does not need to be identified with any Gaius in the New Testament⁽⁵⁾. Since the addressee's name follows the author's name, the relationship between the Elder and Gaius seems to be either a patron-client relationship or a relationship between two persons of equal social

(*) The author wishes to thank Ryan Wallace for editing and proofreading this article.

(1) R.A. CULPEPPER, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John* (Knox Preaching Guides; Atlanta, GA 1985) 129. On house-churches see F.V. FILSON, "The Significance of the Early House Churches", *JBL* 58 (1939) 105-112; O. CULLMANN, *Early Christian Worship* (Philadelphia, PA 1953) 9-10.

(2) J.L. HOULDEN, *The Johannine Epistles* (Harper's New Testament Commentary; New York – Evanston – San Francisco – London 1973) 41-42.

(3) D.K. RENSBERGER, *The Epistles of John* (Westminster Bible Companion; Louisville – London – Leiden 2001) 121. Despite the fact that v. 15 ("greet the friends") might suggest that the letter was not intended just for Gaius, we need to consider that Phlm 2 has "to Apphia...to Archippus...to the church in your house", but the very personal character of the letter (v. 21: ἔγραψά σοι, "I wrote to you") does not imply a public reading of the letter.

status. In fact, though friendly language is sometimes used in a patron-client relationship (cf. John 19,12), it is usually the case that when the addressee holds a superior social status, the common opening of the letter sees the addressee's name preceding the addresser's (e.g., "To king Ptolemy, greeting, from Philista...", P. Enteux 32 [220 BCE]). Moreover this kind of letter — such as a letter of request or petition — lacks health wishes and greetings to third parties. These constructs are considered to be out of place and too familiar, given the social distance between the correspondents⁽⁶⁾. Third John has both health wishes and third party greetings (from and to), making a strong case against Gaius' superior social status. The language of the letter and the caution with which the Elder's requests are spelled out favor the scenario where two persons of equal social status are involved⁽⁷⁾.

Previous studies argue that the Elder composed the letter to recommend Demetrius to Gaius, and that Third John therefore falls into the "letter of recommendation" genre⁽⁸⁾. Such a misreading of the actual purpose of the letter is primarily based on two presuppositions and one underestimation: a. the belief that Third John follows the typical format of a letter of recommendation, such as those found in the papyri; b. the presupposition that Demetrius is very likely the Elder's emissary in need of hospitality and probably the bearer of the letter; c. a failure to take into proper account the way in which the letter is rhetorically built.

This study argues that both presuppositions stand on very shaky ground. After assessing the differences between common letters of

⁽⁶⁾ CULPEPPER, *1 John*, 129.

⁽⁷⁾ Acts 19,29.20,4; Rom 16,23; 1 Cor 1,14. HOULDEN, *The Johannine Epistles*, 151.

⁽⁸⁾ J.L. WHITE, *Light From Ancient Letters* (Foundations and Facets; Philadelphia 1986) 194-195.

⁽⁹⁾ D.A. DESILVA, *The Hope of Glory*. Honor Discourse and New Testament Interpretation (Collegeville, MN 1999) 11.

⁽¹⁰⁾ J. POLHILL, "The setting of 2 John and 3 John", *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10 (2006) 36; R.E. BROWN, *The Epistles of John* (Anchor Bible 30; Garden City, NY 1982) 748; R.B. EDWARDS, *The Johannine Epistles* (New Testament Guides; Sheffield 1996) 23; S.K. STOWERS, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Library of Early Christianity; Philadelphia 1986) 156; A.J. MALHERBE, "Inhospitability of Diotrephes", *God's Christ and His People*. Studies in Honour of Nils Alstrup Dahl (eds. J. JERVELL – W.A. MEEKS) (Oslo 1977) 227; R.W. FUNK, "The Form and Structure of 2 and 3 John", *JBL* 86 (1967) 427; RENSBERGER, *The Epistles of John*, 126; D.J. CLARK, "Discourse Structure in 3 John", *BT* 57 (2006) 112; HOULDEN, *The Johannine Epistles*, 154.

recommendation and Third John, we will show that there is no need to assume that Demetrius is the bearer of the letter. The final section of this paper examines the rhetoric of Third John in an attempt to discern its main purpose, which naturally provides an ulterior argument in favor of our thesis. This thesis suggests that the letter is not a letter of recommendation, but rather an epideictic rhetorical attempt to restore the Elder's honor (discredited by Diotrophes) in Gaius' eyes and persuade him to detach himself from Diotrophes' reprehensible behavior by extending hospitality to the Elder's envoys.

1. *Third John and common letters of recommendation*

White has shown that letters of recommendation in the ancient world have a “distinctive threefold cluster of conventions”: a short opening and closing, a request to welcome somebody, and a promise to repay the favor. This cluster of conventions “remains constant in the body of the letters of recommendation through several centuries, varying only in the phrasing used to express the conventions”⁽⁹⁾. An example of this kind of letter is P. Mich. I,6 (257 BCE):

“...therefore, please make a sincere effort to introduce him to Kleonikos; and if he does not [come upon the latter in your company,] get [letters of introduction] to him (i.e., Kleonikos) from his friends. By doing this you will do us a favor; for I am interested in him. You also must write to us regarding whatever we could do to favor you...”⁽¹⁰⁾.

While acknowledging that Third John shares some common features with the letters of recommendation found in the papyri, such as the expression *καλῶς ποιήσεις* (“you will do well”, v. 6)⁽¹¹⁾, it is also evident that Third John does not expressly ask Gaius to welcome Demetrius. Neither does it mention a reward for the favor: “Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone — and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him...” (v. 12). Moreover, an analysis of the New Testament (Pauline) letters of recommendation (or recommendation sections in longer epistles) shows that in the instances where the bearer of the letter — or the recommended person(s) — is explicitly named, there is also always an explicit mention of the act of *sending* or

⁽⁹⁾ WHITE, *Ancient Letters*, 194.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Translated by WHITE, *Ancient Letters*, 34–35.

⁽¹¹⁾ See for instance P. Mich. VIII,515 (III CE); P. Phil. 16 (161 CE); P. Oslo II,55 (III CE); BL VII,169.

commending, accompanied by a request to *receive* or *welcome* (cf. Phlm 12,17; Rom 16,1-2; Phil 2,25.29). This feature is absent in Third John with regards to Demetrius.

2. *Demetrius, bearer of the letter?*

The more general epistolary conventions of the Graeco-Roman world (especially between 200 BCE and 200 CE) show⁽¹²⁾ that the letter carrier, when expressly named, played a more significant role than simply physically delivering the letter: he was entrusted to supply information (e.g., P. Oxy 292 [c. 25 CE]), deliver goods (e.g., P. Oxy II,113; P. Oxy II,3313; P. Oxy 300 [late I CE]; P. Oxy 529 [II CE]), and in some cases act as the representative of the sender (e.g., P. Oxy 743 [2 BCE]; P. Oxy 293 [27 CE]; P. Coll. III,6). But in all these scenarios, the letter carrier is named in the letter *and* the recipient is carefully instructed regarding the role of the letter bearer. In contrast, as Lieu has already noted⁽¹³⁾, 3 John 12 introduces Demetrius with the passive voice of μαρτυρέω (perfect passive: μεμαρτύρηται ὑπὸ πάντων, “[he] has received a good testimony from everyone”). The passive voice of μαρτυρέω is used in the New Testament to introduce an example worthy of honor and imitation, and not a letter bearer or an envoy in need of hospitality: Acts 6,3 (the “seven”, μαρτυρουμένους); 10,22 (Cornelius, μαρτυρούμενός); 22,12 (Ananias, μαρτυρούμενος); 1 Tim 5,10 (the “good widow”, μαρτυρουμένη)⁽¹⁴⁾.

In Third John, Demetrius is explicitly named, praised by “everyone”, “the truth itself”, and the Elder and his entourage (“we”), and yet not explicitly mentioned as being sent by the Elder. Demetrius is not portrayed as needing hospitality, carrying out a specific function, or acting as a representative of the Elder. In light of these considerations, we suggest that he could very well have been a person known by Gaius for being a noble and exemplary Christian, and not necessarily the bearer of the letter. Moreover, the following section shows that if we seriously consider Demetrius’ role in the rhetorical

⁽¹²⁾ P.M. HEAD, “Letter Carriers in Personal Letters among the Papyri and Pauline Epistolary Communication Strategy” (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the British New Testament Society, Social World Seminar 1-3 Sept. 2005) 1-13. Available online in PDF format at www.gmir.ru/old/ecclesia/pdf/june/Head.pdf

⁽¹³⁾ J. LIEU, *The Second and Third Epistles of John. History and Background* (Studies of the New Testament and Its World; Edinburgh 1986) 118.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Cf. also Heb 11,2; 1 Clem 18,1.44,3.

composition of the letter, it makes more sense to consider Demetrius as a praiseworthy character previously known by Gaius, rather than a stranger letter-carrier.

3. *Third John's use of Rhetoric*

Today's scholars estimate that in ancient Roman Palestine, only about 10 percent of the population was able to read and write⁽¹⁵⁾. The number of people who had access to formal rhetorical training was dramatically less. However, as DeSilva puts it, the New Testament authors very likely had the chance to enjoy the "informal training of hearing orators at work, of learning inductively the art of persuasion"⁽¹⁶⁾. Moreover, if we observe for instance the way letters were written — the various styles and different formats of literary letters, the less refined correspondence found on papyri, and the *ostraca* — we notice some widespread patterns. In one way or another, these patterns were influenced by Cicero's letters, mostly published after his death in 43 BCE⁽¹⁷⁾. Though a number of commentaries on letter writing were written during late antiquity, it is hard to know if they had an actual impact on the way letters were written. The consensus today seems to be that these commentaries were rather acknowledging and rationalizing the different patterns and styles already in use, since ancient letter books of styles and the actual letters share the same basic three-fold understanding of the functions and purposes of correspondence: *Philophronesis* (the friendly relationship between two persons); *Parousia* (reviving the friendly relationship of physically separated correspondents); *Omilia/dialogos* (main function of the letter: dialogic conversation)⁽¹⁸⁾.

It has already been shown that letters were used to carry religious and philosophical teachings since the first century CE⁽¹⁹⁾. Further, it is very likely that New Testament authors were exposed to the art of

⁽¹⁵⁾ W.V. HARRIS, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge 1989) 1-24; C. HEZSER, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Text und Studien zum antiken Judentum; Tübingen 2001) 496.

⁽¹⁶⁾ D.A. DESILVA, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*. Unlocking New Testament Culture (Downers Grove, IL 2000) 42, n. 19.

⁽¹⁷⁾ W.G. DOTY, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (Guides to Biblical Scholarship; Philadelphia, PA 1973) 2-3.

⁽¹⁸⁾ See for instance Demetrius' *Peri hermeneias*. DOTY, *Letters*, 8-9; 11-12.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Cf. the letters of Apollonius of Tyana (born 4 BCE), cited by DOTY, *Letters*, 3.

rhetoric in oral and written discourse. A first-century inhabitant of a city would naturally perceive the difference between a discourse given at a council hall regarding a decision to be made about a future course of action, a verdict given in a courtroom, or an eulogy praising the good deeds and moral qualities of the dead, even without necessarily being formally trained in the technicalities of deliberative, judicial, and epideictic rhetoric. Given the particular cultural setting, it is also very possible that the link between deliberative and epideictic rhetoric was commonly acknowledged, even though not systematized as in Aristotle and Quintilian. Therefore, we believe it is appropriate to approach the letters of John assuming that the author was intentionally using some literary and rhetorical devices as he organized and structured his arguments. While the Elder of Third John might not have been formally trained in the arts of rhetoric, it is important to acknowledge that he lived in a time and place where rhetoric was generally used and practiced. Even if he did not have direct access to Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, or Quintilian's *Institutes*, he surely was aware — because of his experience in and exposure to the public life — of the different styles, tools, and levels of persuasion⁽²⁰⁾. It is precisely because of his cultural setting that the Elder was prone to persuade by means of examples and analogies, by demonstrating his own credibility and honor, and by arousing feelings such as anger, shame, and the desire to emulate⁽²¹⁾.

For these reasons, it is necessary to gain further insight into the Elder's art of persuasion by using ancient manuals on rhetoric, not as the textbooks from which he draws his allegedly sophisticated figures of speech, but as sources that will enable us to better understand the culture and context in which the first century author wrote. Therefore, this study attempts to take a close look at the stylistic and rhetorical features contained in the structure of Third John, which undeniably falls within the epistolary genre. The text of the writing, its length, and its style clearly indicate that we are dealing with an ordinary letter, and not a literary work. While acknowledging the need to study Third John from a rhetorical perspective, we emphasize the fact that this short letter, which fits easily on a single sheet of papyrus, is not comparable to even the shortest of Cicero's letters. Though the Elder surely used some common and widespread rhetorical devices, it seems too much to

⁽²⁰⁾ Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1,9,35-36; Quintilian, *Inst.* 3,7,28.

⁽²¹⁾ Cf. the legacy of Aristotle's classification of the three rhetorical appeals to *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* (*Rhet.* 1,2).

assume that he was well versed in the study of principles and rules of composition.

4. The “rhetorical” arrangement of Third John

a) Opening Formula (v. 1)

Despite Funk’s acclaimed remarks on the Hellenistic character of the letter⁽²²⁾, Third John’s opening formula is more akin to Aramaic letters. Like Third John, such letters often lack a word of greeting⁽²³⁾ (instead, he mentions the “truth”, which alerts the reader to the tone and one of the main themes of the letter⁽²⁴⁾). Moreover, while the addressee is identified by his name, the sender introduces himself as simply “the Elder”, without specifying his name. This is also atypical of common Greek letters⁽²⁵⁾. On the other hand, the author employs a health wish (though not in the opening formula, but just after, in v. 2), which is common in Hellenistic papyri (e.g., P. Paris 43 [154 BC]⁽²⁶⁾). Third John also distances itself from the common pattern of NT letters, which usually combine in their opening words such as peace, grace, and/or mercy (cf. 1 Cor 1,3; Eph 1,2; Phil 1,2; 1 Tim 1,2; 2 Tim 1,2; Titus 1,4; 2 John 3).

The above remarks show that the Elder freely composed his letter without necessarily fitting a specific mold, but drawing from his Jewish and Graeco-Roman background.

b) Thanksgiving and commendation (vv. 2-4)

In the opening formula, Gaius finds himself as the recipient of the Elder’s health wish. While a number of papyri have a health wish at the onset of the letter (e.g., P. Yale 42 [229 BCE]; P. Mert I,12 [58 CE];

⁽²²⁾ FUNK, “Form and Structure”, 424-425.

⁽²³⁾ EDWARDS, *The Johannine Epistles*, 23. A word of greeting is usually missing in Greek letters dealing with business or philosophical matters, which is not the case for our letter (cf. H.-J. KLAUCK, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament. A Guide to Context and Exegesis* [Waco, TX 2006] 27-28). Thus 3 John’s opening is very atypical.

⁽²⁴⁾ The next short section (v. 2-4) repeats the word ἀλήθεια three times.

⁽²⁵⁾ BROWN, *John*, 789. KLAUCK, *Ancient Letters*, 27. An example of the common threefold opening formula (*superscriptio, adscriptio, salutatio*) is P. Oslo II,47 (August 23, 1 CE): “Dionysios to his dearest Theon, very many greetings and for ever good health”.

⁽²⁶⁾ “Serapion, to his brothers Ptolemaeus and Apollonius, greetings. If you are well, it would be excellent; I myself am well”; cf. also the previously mentioned P. Oslo II,47.

BGU II,632 [II CE]), Third John's mention of it in the *exordium* of the letter rather than in its opening, and the combination of the verbs εὐχομαι and ὑγιαίνω, is unique⁽²⁷⁾. This is no accident: the Elder is already trying to gain Gaius' positive acceptance of the letter, and the very mention of his desire to see Gaius' health prosper "as your soul is prospering" (καθὼς εὐδοοῦται, σου ἡ ψυχὴ) is a praise of Gaius' spiritual life⁽²⁸⁾. A common feature of any persuasive discourse is to ingratiate the listener. Third John therefore uses the health wish as what a rhetor would call a *captatio benevolentiae*: an attempt to gain the listener's (or reader's) goodwill and attention by using praises drawn from the audience itself⁽²⁹⁾.

The expression of joy which immediately follows (v. 3) is a common feature in ancient correspondence, especially as a reaction to good news about the recipient's wellbeing⁽³⁰⁾. The function of this thanksgiving was, again, to put "the readers in a benevolent mood to receive the message which may contain a demand or even a warning"⁽³¹⁾. The reason for the Elder's joy is that Gaius walks "in truth". Interestingly enough, the Elder uses redundancy and repetition to express his feelings and portray Gaius as a praiseworthy person.

Firstly, consider the assonance of the words ἐχάρην ("I rejoiced", v. 3) and χαράν ("joy", v. 4)⁽³²⁾. Secondly, there is a duplication of the same sentence: ἐν ἀληθείᾳ περιπατεῖς (v. 3) and ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ περιπατοῦντα (v. 4) both refer to Gaius' commendable general way of living (cf. 1 John 1,6-7.2,6; 2 John 4; 1 Cor 3,3). Thirdly, the triple repetition of the word "truth" in vv. 3-4 clearly directs the reader's attention to a well known *topos* in the ancient world: truth and truthfulness as an honorable reality and quality, respectively⁽³³⁾.

⁽²⁷⁾ FUNK, "Form and Structure", 425 notes that the combination of these two verbs is not found either in the NT or in the Apostolic Fathers. The only instance is in P. Oxy XVI,1680 (late III or early IV CE).

⁽²⁸⁾ Cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 8.4.9-14; D.F. WATSON, "A Rhetorical Analysis of 3 John: A Study in Epistolary Rhetoric", *CBQ* 51 (1989) 487.

⁽²⁹⁾ Cf. *Rhet. Her.* 1,5; 3,6,11-12; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3,14,1414b-1415a; Cicero, *Inv.* 1,15-17.

⁽³⁰⁾ Cf. Polycarp, *Phil* 1,1-2; P. Giess 21 (II CE); P. Mich. VIII, 474; VIII, 495; VIII, 473 (all from II CE).

⁽³¹⁾ BROWN, *John*, 791. Cf. also 2 Macc 1,11.

⁽³²⁾ The omission or addition of letters to create assonance and redundancy (παρονομασία) is discussed in *Her.* 4,21,29; Cicero, *Or. Brut.* 25,84 and *De or.* 2,63,256.

⁽³³⁾ Cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 4,1,16. WATSON, "Rhetorical Analysis", 487.

The *exordium* of the letter is thus a somewhat explicit attempt to gain Gaius' favor by highlighting his spiritual prosperity, his faithfulness, and praiseworthy general behavior, which, of course, brings great joy to the Elder himself. It is not clear yet if the Elder believes Gaius to be already on his side or if he feels the need to persuade him.

c) Commission to Gaius / bad ("pagans") and good ("we") examples (vv. 5-8)

A second vocative (after that of v. 2) marks the beginning of a new section. The Elder now moves from praise to request, but with tact and always upholding Gaius' laudable behavior and presumed willingness to keep and achieve honor as his main argument. In fact, the Elder again proceeds by praising Gaius for what he "faithfully does" (πιστὸν ποιεῖς, v. 5). He also refers to a specific occasion in which "the brothers" testified to Gaius' love before the church (v. 6a)⁽³⁴⁾. However, the Elder is very vague in defining the occasion and content of Gaius' actions: "whatever you work towards the brothers especially [when they are] stranger" (v. 5) is a very indefinite construction which employs ἐάν followed by the aorist subjunctive of the verb ἐργάζομαι⁽³⁵⁾. This description of the brothers as "strangers" suggests that the Elder is probably alluding to hospitality, but there is no indication that Gaius has already extended hospitality to the brothers. The overall impression one gets of this section of the letter is that the Elder is praising Gaius for his "general" praiseworthy behavior and attitude, which is well known by the brethren. The Elder suggests that because of this honorable reputation, Gaius should be ready to eventually give further proof of his commendable Christian character by extending hospitality to some brother, even if a stranger, connected with the Elder. In ancient Mediterranean culture, hospitality was a sacred bond and refusing it to a friend or to a friend's envoy would have been considered shameful (cf. *Rhet. Her.* 3,3,4).

At this juncture, the suggestion becomes an invitation: "you will do well to send them in a manner worthy of God" (οὕς καλῶς ποιήσεις προπέμψας ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ, v. 6b). The verb προπέμπω clearly has the meaning of "equipping someone with the necessary provisions when

⁽³⁴⁾ So should be understood the meaning if the aorist indicative ἐμαρτύρησάν ("they bore witness"). Cf. LIEU, *Epistles of John*, 104.

⁽³⁵⁾ S. LANGDON, "History of the use of ἐάν for ἄν in Relative Clauses", *American Journal of Philology* 24 (1903) 447-451.

he sets forth on a journey” (cf. Acts 15,3; 21,5; Titus 3,13). Paul refers precisely to this kind of support in 1 Cor 9,4-14, as he also depended on Christian’s hospitality (cf. 1 Cor 16,5-6; Phlm 22)⁽³⁶⁾. The expression καλῶς ποιήσεις is well attested in the papyri, and seems to indicate a “cautious request”⁽³⁷⁾. However, the Elder continues to build his case to achieve his real goal: explicitly solicit Gaius’ support. The brethren, the Elder presses, “went out for the sake of the Name” (τοῦ ὀνόματος ἐξήλθον, v. 7a). This is no occasional aside: in the ancient world, the manner in which a person’s name was treated affected his or her honor. The fact that the itinerants bear “the Name” makes them worthy of being treated with the honor due to Jesus. Failing to do so would not only disgrace the brethren, but be an affront to Christ himself⁽³⁸⁾. The need of honoring “the Name” together with the notion of “hospitality” as a necessary endeavor towards friends’ envoys⁽³⁹⁾ (to preserve and reciprocate honor) strengthens the Elder’s basis for requesting Gaius’ support.

The Elder artfully adds, in the second part of v. 7, that the itinerants “have been receiving nothing from the pagans⁽⁴⁰⁾”. We believe that the expression μηδὲν λαμβάνοντες should be translated as “receiving

⁽³⁶⁾ POLHILL, “The setting of 2 John and 3 John”, 35. In ancient times, hospitality meant more than just hosting somebody: it was expected to provide the travelers with all they might need to continue their journey. Traveling in the ancient world was a dangerous activity. Robbers, wild animals, and unsafe, immoral hostels were real concerns for any traveler (Cf. Luke 10,25-37 and *Mek. Exod. 2*: R.W. GEHRING, *House Church and Mission*. The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity [Peabody, MA 2004] 287).

⁽³⁷⁾ KLAUCK, *Ancient Letters*, 34, who notes that P. Oxy II,299,3-4 uses the same expression.

⁽³⁸⁾ As C.G. KRUSE, *The Letters of John* (The Pillar New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI 2000) 224 noted, the context of the other usages of this expression in the New Testament is one of persecution (Acts 5,41; 9,16; 15,26; 21,13. Rom 1,5 is an exception, as the topic is Paul’s mission “to bring about the obedience of faith...among all the nations”). It is also very possible that the Elder alludes to the fact that his people have been and will be — because of the very nature of their mission — persecuted. However, we cannot ignore that in this honor-shame based culture, among the symbols of honor, the “name” had great relevance. For some examples of “honoring the name” see Ps 29,2; 34,3; Tob 3,11; 8,5; 11,14; Matt 6,9; John 17,6.26; Rom 9,17; 15,9; “despising the name”: see Ps 9,5; Is 52,5; Rom 2,24; 1 Tim 6,1 (DESILVA, *Honor Discourse*, 120; *Patronage*, 32).

⁽³⁹⁾ DESILVA, *Honor Discourse*, 16. Cf. *Rhet. Her.* 3,3,4.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνικῶν does not seem to have here an ethnic connotation, since Gaius and Demetrius were Gentiles themselves, bearing Greek names.

nothing” instead of “accepting nothing”⁽⁴¹⁾ for a couple of reasons. The verb λαμβάνω is often used in its active form as a periphrasis for the passive, especially in the context of hospitality (cf. 2 John 10; John 19,27), or when it refers to the act of “receiving something from someone”⁽⁴²⁾. Moreover, the Johannine corpus uses the same verb to refer to those who are sent by Christ and need to be received as Christ himself (John 13,20)⁽⁴³⁾. It is therefore clear that the Elder’s intention is to underscore the fact that the pagans are not supporting the Christian itinerants, which is somehow expected. What is not expected is that fellow Christians would also let them down. The expression ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνικῶν does not bear an ethnic meaning, but contrasts the (Christian) “we” of v. 8, which immediately follows: the word ἐθνικός here might therefore mean hostile in a religious sense⁽⁴⁴⁾.

Since the Elder does not assume himself and Gaius to be like those pagans who refused to honor the name by supporting the Christian itinerants, he continues by saying that “we have to receive them” (ἡμεῖς οὖν ὀφείλομεν ὑπολαμβάνειν τοὺς τοιούτους, v. 8a): it is important at this point for the Elder to draw a connection between himself and Gaius, as two honorable people standing on the same side and sharing the same good ethos⁽⁴⁵⁾. It has already been noted that the expression ὀφείλομεν ὑπολαμβάνειν is in fact a diplomatic obligation, since the Johannine literature often uses the verb ὀφείλω in the context of a required attitude (cf. John 13,14; 1 John 3,16.4,11)⁽⁴⁶⁾. To this we add that ὀφείλω literally means “to owe”. Followed by an infinitive (as in 3 John 8), it indicates a

⁽⁴¹⁾ The very act of refusing help to Christian itinerants is often connected to their willingness to differentiate themselves from the Cynics, also known as “begging philosophers” (POLHILL, “The setting of 2 John and 3 John”, 35-36; LIEU, *Epistles of John*, 108). However, the current study shows that the aim of Third John is not to draw a contrast between Christian and pagan itinerants, but between the need of supporting such as opposed to a “pagan” indifference.

⁽⁴²⁾ In this latter use, the verb is in its active form followed by the particle ἀπὸ (as in 3 John 7): Epictetus, *Diatr.* 4,11,3 (ἀπὸ θεόν); *Apoc. Pet.* Rainer In. 19 (ἀπὸ τίνος); *Apoc. Mos.* 19 (ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ); Justin, *Dial.* 78.10 (ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ); 1 John 2,27 (ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ); M.M. MITCHELL, “‘Diotrephes Does Not Receive Us’: The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10”, *JBL* 117/2 (1998) 318.

⁽⁴³⁾ The emphasis is therefore on the need of accepting them, not on their reluctance in accepting help from strangers. Cf. MITCHELL, “Social Context”, 318, who also cites Philo, *Legat.* 369.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ So also KRUSE, *John*, 224.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Cf. Cicero, *Part. or.* 9,31-32 and Quintilian, *Inst.* 4,2.125-127, quoted by WATSON, “Rhetorical Analysis”, 492.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ BROWN, *John*, 741.

necessity imposed by nature, reason, or duty: e.g., John 13,14; 19,7; Luke 17,10; Acts 17,29; Rom 15,1.27; 1 Cor 5,10; 9,10⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Read in this way, this section (vv. 5-8) starts off with an implicit suggestion ("you do faithfully whatever you work for the brothers", v. 5), goes through a cautious request ("you will do well to send them..." v. 6), and reaches its own climax in the explicit commission of v. 8a: "we have to receive them". As Watson rightly argued, vv. 7-8 form an incomplete syllogism (enthymeme), where the unstated premise of v. 7 seems to be "[a]nyone who sets out for the sake of the name is worthy of support from fellow Christians"⁽⁴⁸⁾. The Elder confronts Gaius with the non-supportive attitude of the heathens, and then commends the required Christian attitude. It is clear at this point that Gaius is invited to act upon an appeal to an ethic of honor. Though Gaius might have been convinced that he himself was an honorable man because of his status or his embodiment of actions and qualities commonly considered honorable, the Elder asks him to achieve further honor by meeting the expectations of those whom Gaius regards as significant others (the Elder and the Elder's congregation), who in fact have already born witness of Gaius commitment ("...some of the brethren...bore witness of your truth", v. 3). The attitude expected from Gaius is also based on theological premises: the Elder concludes this section by affirming the necessity of receiving the brothers "so that we might be co-workers of the truth" (ἵνα συνεργοὶ γινώμεθα τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, v. 8b)⁽⁴⁹⁾. The word ἀλήθεια⁽⁵⁰⁾ here is obviously connected to v. 1, where the Elder make a connection between Gaius and himself, and with vv. 3-4, which praise Gaius for the truth that is in him and for walking in the truth. The Elder makes it clear that it is a natural and reasonable expectation for Gaius to be (or become) a co-worker with the truth itself.

d) Condemnation of Diotrephes (vv. 9-10)

What follows next is perhaps the most interesting section of the letter. The Elder introduces a new character in his attempt to convince

⁽⁴⁷⁾ ὀφείλω, in J.H. THAYER, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York – Cincinnati – Chicago 1889) 469.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ WATSON, "Rhetorical Analysis", 494-495, quoting Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1,2,1357a.13-14; 2,22-26; Quintilian, *Inst.* 5,10,1-3; 5,14,1-4.24-26.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Cf. Rom 16,3,9; Phil 4,3; Phlm 24. For the use of the cognate verb συνεργέω see 1 Cor 16,16 and PSI 376, 969.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ seems here to be best translated as a simple dative, not as a dative of advantage (for the sake of the truth). See WATSON, "Rhetorical Analysis", 495 and BROWN, *John*, 714.

Gaius to give proof of his allegiance: Diotrophes, very likely a better-endowed Christian, whose house became a place where local believers would meet for worship purposes (cf. Rom 16,3-5.23; Col 4,15; Phlm 2; 1 Pet 4,9)⁽⁵¹⁾. Was Gaius already aware of the ongoing conflict between the Elder and Diotrophes⁽⁵²⁾? Our guess is that he was, but whatever the case might have been, it does not change the function and purpose of Diotrophes' mention and description in the economy of the Elder's argumentation. Third John is ascribable to the epideictic fashion of rhetorically stimulating a positive response in the audience. Therefore, it is almost expected that his previous reference to a noble behavior performed by honorable people ("we have to receive them", v. 8) in contrast to disgraceful hostility perpetuated by unworthy people ("They received nothing from the pagans", v. 7) should be somehow expanded⁽⁵³⁾. The Elder introduces Diotrophes as an anti-example, much like he did with the "pagans" of v. 7. The fact that Gaius might have known Diotrophes personally makes the matter even more intriguing, since the Elder has already started, as we will shortly show, to undermine — especially by means of irony — his moral character.

To start with, Diotrophes is introduced as ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων αὐτῶν ("the one having desire for preeminence among them", v. 9). The word is a NT *hapax*, but its cognate noun φιλοπρωτος appears in classical Greek literature, often with a negative connotation (cf. Artemidorus Daldianus, *Onir.* 2,32; Plutarch, *Alc.* 2,2; *Sol.* 95b.). As Lieu remarks, similar forms (e.g., φιλότιμος) are found in inscriptions referring to benefactors. She therefore suggests that "it is possible that this is a parody or rejection of a 'secular' designation of honour"⁽⁵⁴⁾.

⁽⁵¹⁾ Cf. DESILVA, *Patronage*, 215.

⁽⁵²⁾ A lot has been written about the motives behind Diotrophes' hostility, but, truth be said, all hypotheses about the source of the conflict between the Elder and Diotrophes are plain speculations. As MITCHELL, "Social Context", 299-320 has showed in a masterly and influential fashion, the only information we can draw from the text is that Diotrophes did not receive the Elder's itinerants as guests. Third John 9 and 10 have the same verb ἐπιδέχομαι, meaning the same thing: "to receive [as a guest]". While it is safe to assume that Diotrophes did not receive the Elder's envoys, nothing can be inferred about the reason behind such a refusal.

⁽⁵³⁾ It was very common for rhetors to develop a series of dichotomies (e.g., virtue/vice, noble/disgraceful) as a means to drive home the point: Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1,9; 2,22,1396; *Rhet. Alex.* 3,35,1440b,14-1441b,29; Cicero, *Inv.* 2,59,177; *De or.* 2,84-85. WATSON, "Rhetorical Analysis", 493-494.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ LIEU, *Epistles of John*, 111.

Diotrephes, the Elder continues, “does not receive us”⁽⁵⁵⁾. Once again he draws a strong parallelism between the lack of help offered by the pagans in v. 7 and Diotrephes’ refusal in v. 9: the verb δέχομαι and its cognates are often used as equivalent of λαμβάνω and its cognates, making them—in the context of hospitality—practically synonyms (cf. Acts 28,2; Phlm 17; Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1,247; Mark 6,11; Col 4,10; Did 11,1-3; Acts 17,7.18,27; 21,27.28,7; Rom 16,2; Phil 2,29; Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 10,1; Hermas, *Sim.* 8,10,3.9,27,2)⁽⁵⁶⁾.

Having suggested this daring parallelism, the Elder gains momentum as he announces his possible coming: “for this [reason], if I come...” (διὰ τοῦτο, ἐὰν ἔλθω, v. 10). Diotrephes, by rejecting the Elder’s envoys, has *de facto* rejected the Elder himself, without giving him a chance to defend his honor. A public response to the public challenge was expected, and very likely the Elder alludes to it in v. 10. Notice that the Elder talks about a possible coming before expanding on Diotrephes’ contentious behavior. Further, as many commentators have already noticed, v. 10 does not contain any doctrinal accusation or threat of excommunication⁽⁵⁷⁾. It appears to us that the announced coming of v. 10 serves a rhetorical purpose in the Elder’s argumentation. To begin with, it is clear that the Elder is not threatening to come with the purpose to excommunicate Diotrephes: his intention is more likely to keep — instead of breaking up — their relationship⁽⁵⁸⁾. Secondly, the lack of any word of excommunication may also imply that the Elder does not have enough authority over Diotrephes⁽⁵⁹⁾. If Diotrephes refused to accept the Elder’s emissaries, and fiercely hinders others from doing so, he clearly does not fear the Elder’s wrath. It is therefore important to understand that the Elder’s

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Verse 9 literally reads Διοτρέφης οὐκ ἐπιδέχεται ἡμᾶς, but it is evident that the Elder refers to the lack of hospitality towards his envoys. It is not necessary to assume that the Elder himself was refused hospitality, since in the ancient world there was the common understanding that “[t]he reception of the letter and its bearer proved the good will of the recipient toward the writer” (MALHERBE, “Inhospitality”, 228). Cf. Phlm 17; P. Oslo II,55 (II-III CE); P. Oxy. XIV,1663 (II-III CE); P. Oxy 32 (=CPL 249); P. Ryl. 4,691 (III CE); 1 Macc 12,8.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ MALHERBE, “Inhospitality”, 230.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ LIEU, *Epistles of John*, 158 notices that the Elder does not see Diotrephes’ refusal of hospitality charged with theological meaning, whereas Paul (2 Cor 10-13) and Ignatius (*Trall* 2; *Magn* 3.6-7; *Eph* 5) do with regards to their own opponents.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ GEHRING, *House Church*, 283.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ HOULDEN, *The Johannine Epistles*, 10; RENSBERGER, *The Epistles of John*, 120.

goal in mentioning his possible appearance at this precise junction of the text is not intended to announce his actual coming⁽⁶⁰⁾. Even from a grammatical point of view, the clause ἐάν followed by a subjunctive does not indicate certitude, but rather probability (cf. Matt 18,3). Instead, it is designed to arouse in Gaius a sense of urgency⁽⁶¹⁾ (as Gaius is called to consider despicable Diotrephes' refusal) and perhaps provoke some discomfort (as he is also confronted with the possibility of entering into conflict with Diotrephes)⁽⁶²⁾.

Clearly, the improbable coming of the Elder could not stir a fearful reaction in Diotrephes. The purpose of the visit would merely be to "cause to remember" (ὑπομνήσω) the deeds that Diotrephes "keeps doing" anyway (ὑπομνήσω αὐτοῦ τὰ ἔργα ἃ ποιεῖ, v. 10). The very vague character of the expression itself ("recall" to whom?)⁽⁶³⁾, shows that the Elder was acutely aware of his lack of authority vis-à-vis Diotrephes (compare the contrast between the authority-filled passage of 2 John 10 and 3 John 10)⁽⁶⁴⁾. Further, the verb ὑπομνήσκω carries a sense of admonition and warning in other places of the NT (cf. 2 Tim 2,14; 2 Pet 1,12; Titus 3,1; Jude 5), but never that of condemnation or reproof. The lack of a public opportunity to re-establish his challenged and frankly trampled authority and honor did not restrain the Elder's reaction. Feeling the need to secure Gaius' allegiance, The Elder displaces the conflict between himself and Diotrephes from the public arena to the private arena. Instead of confronting Diotrephes — who had already refused the Elder's emissaries and probably would not

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Cf. CULPEPPER, *1 John*, 134 and BROWN, *John*, 749.

⁽⁶¹⁾ Cf. Aristotle, *Rhet* 2,5: "...when it is advisable that the audience should be frightened, the orator must make them feel that they really are in danger of something...at an unexpected time..."

⁽⁶²⁾ The potential conflict between Gaius and Diotrephes raises an interesting question regarding their "location". While a consensus exists on the fact that Gaius did not belong to the same house-church as Diotrephes, since Diotrephes "loves to be first among them" (v. 9) (POLHILL, "The setting of 2 John and 3 John", 36; RENSBERGER, *The Epistles of John*, 120; BROWN, *John*, 729; MALHERBE, "Inhospitability", 226; CULPEPPER, *1 John*, 133), it is not clear whether Gaius was the head of another house-church (GEHRING, *House Church*, 283-284) or was being called by the Elder to become one (BROWN, *John*, 731-732). There is no evidence in 3 John that Gaius hosted a congregation, and one cannot even infer that the Elder was asking him to do so as a reaction to Diotrephes' misconduct: while criticizing Diotrephes' deeds, the Elder never questions his authority.

⁽⁶³⁾ CULPEPPER, *1 John*, 134.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ Cf. HOULDEN, *The Johannine Epistles*, 10, and KLAUCK, *Ancient Letters*, 35.

hesitate refusing hospitality to the Elder himself! — and showing Gaius his (the Elder's) re-established honorable status, the Elder engages in a written depiction of Diotrephes whose purpose is to convince Gaius of the ridiculous and evil pretensions of Diotrephes, regardless of whether or not the Elder had the opportunity — or the power — to challenge his opponent.

Ridicule and evil coexist in the oxymoronic expression λόγοις πονηροῖς φλυαρῶν ἡμᾶς ("babbling evil words against us", v. 10). The verb φλυαρέω is a NT *hapax*, but the cognate adjective φλύαρος appears in 1 Tim 5,13. Literally, φλυαρέω means "to spout nonsense", but also to produce "childish babbling", and φλύαρος refers to a "babblers who talk at random"⁽⁶⁵⁾. Interestingly enough, Plutarch and Philo use this verb in the context of unreliable speech: "...if Phocion continues to talk nonsense, are you going to believe him?" (Plutarch, *Phoc.* 27,9), and "...these people spread endless nonsense" (Philo, *Contempl. Life* 19)⁽⁶⁶⁾. If Diotrephes is depicted as babbling, his utterances do not seem so innocuous to the Elder: the λόγοις πονηροῖς remind Gaius of the gravity of the situation (cf. 1 John 3,12; 2 John 11).

To complicate the matter, and make Diotrephes appear the more foolish and evil, the Elder adds: "and not content with that, he doesn't receive the brethren, and also hinders those who want [to welcome them] and puts them out of the congregation" (v. 10). The triple — and perhaps excessive — recurrence of the conjunction καί (polysyndeton) surely gives more impetus to the single phrase containing a triple accusation to be read all in one go⁽⁶⁷⁾, and the repetition of the verb ἐπιδέχομαι⁽⁶⁸⁾ in this section ties Diotrephes' refusal to receive the

⁽⁶⁵⁾ "Uttering nonsense": Xenophon, *Hell.* 3,1,18.6.12; Philo, *Dreams* 2,291; Josephus, *Life* 150; 4 Macc 5,10; Diogenes Laertius 7,173; P. Berlin 13270,5; "childish babbling": P. Cair. Zen 59300,7; PSI 434,7,9; P. Oxy 2813 (C. SPICQ, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* [Peabody, MA 1982] 466).

⁽⁶⁶⁾ SPICQ, *Lexicon*, 466.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Cf. WATSON, "Rhetorical Analysis", 496, who points to Quintilian, *Inst.* 8,4,26-27 and *Rhet. Her.* 4,40,52-53.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ Since the household was the center and model of the first Christian congregations, its structure affected the organization of the churches. It is true that 1 Tim 3,2-5; Titus 1,6-8; and Hermas, *Sim* IX,27,2 seem to indicate that the householder was likely to be the leader of the congregation as well. However it is also possible that Diotrephes had authority as a householder and not necessarily as spiritual leader. Since the local Christians were meeting at his house, he could extend or deny hospitality to some of them (GEHRING, *House Church*, 284; MALHERBE, "Inhospitability", 228; RENSBERGER, *The Epistles of John*, 124-125). If

Elder's emissaries with the pretense of refusing the Elder himself (cf. v. 9). But more importantly, the Elder manages to strategically arouse Gaius' indignation⁽⁶⁹⁾ against Diotrephes' ridiculous yet evil pretensions: not only has Diotrephes heaped shame upon the Elder, but he has also shamed other members of the congregation by refusing them hospitality⁽⁷⁰⁾. By now, it must be clear to Gaius that the Elder's implicit (as a pagan refusing to honor "the Name"; parody of a leader; ridiculous utterances in form and content) and formal (evil words; open refusal to extend hospitality; heaping shame upon well-meaning brothers) accusations unequivocally demand that he takes a stand.

e) Appeal to Gaius / bad ("[those who] have not seen God") and good ("[those] from God"; Demetrius) examples (vv. 11-12)

As he ponders the conflict between the Elder and Diotrephes and his own future course of actions, Gaius is pressed by the Elder more than ever. His decision-making process is affected (or so the Elder hopes) by a compelling warning, followed by a last implicit accusation to Diotrephes and, for the sake of contrast, an exemplary and trustworthy model.

Verse 11a is parenetical because it contains a vocative followed by a heartfelt injunction in the imperative form: "beloved, do not keep imitating what is evil, but what is good". Some argue that 3 John 11a is a sort of maxim or proverb, used to create common ground between the author and the addressee, since a proverbial sentence usually belongs to a common cultural heritage (cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 8,5,1-2; *Rhet. Her.* 4,17,24; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2,21)⁽⁷¹⁾. However it is also a sharp warning, since Gaius' two options are in fact evil and good⁽⁷²⁾. The

this was the case, we do not need to assume that Diotrephes' excommunication acts were comparable to the "casting out" of the Synagogue (John 9,22.34-35), nor that "...Diotrephes must have had the tacit approval of the majority of the members of the church; otherwise this action would have failed" (*contra* KRUSE, *John*, 228).

⁽⁶⁹⁾ Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2,9: "Most directly opposed to pity is the feeling called Indignation. ...it is our duty...to feel sympathy and pity for unmerited distress...". Along with indignation, the Elder might also be trying to arouse in Gaius a sense of responsibility and the perception of being the last faithful friend on whom he could rely: so WATSON, "Rhetorical Analysis", 487 (cf. *Rhet. Her.* 1,5,8; Quintilian, *Inst.* 4,1,8-9).

⁽⁷⁰⁾ Being excluded from a community was perceived as shameful: cf. Matt 18,15-18, where the approach is very tactful.

⁽⁷¹⁾ WATSON, "Rhetorical Analysis", 497; BROWN, *John*, 720; KLAUCK, *Ancient Letters*, 11.

⁽⁷²⁾ LIEU, *Epistles of John*, 115.

parenetical warning is quickly followed by the ultimate dichotomy and implicit argument against Diotrophes: “the one who does good is from God, the one who does evil has not seen God” (v. 11b).

Gaius, who was previously praised for “faithfully doing” (v. 5, πιστὸν ποιεῖς), and encouraged to “do well” (v. 6, καλῶς ποιήσεις) — always in reference to extending hospitality to the brethren — is now concretely and unmistakably confronted with the necessity of acknowledging that only the one who does good (read: is willing to host the Elder’s envoys) is from God, while the others (read: Diotrophes and the like) have not seen God. Intentionally or not, the Elder embodies the Isocratic motto: “Consider it ...disgraceful to be outdone by your enemies in doing injury...” (*Ad Demon.* 26).

After delivering the final blow to Diotrophes, the Elder manages to facilitate Gaius choice by arousing his desire of emulation: “Demetrius has [a] good report of all [church members?], and of the truth itself, and we [also] bear witness...” (v. 12a). As DeSilva showed⁽⁷³⁾, oral and written epideictic and deliberative discourses commonly contained ornate descriptions of honored individuals who embodied highly valued — but attainable — virtues, and hence moved the audience to a feeling of emulation: “Let us assume that emulation is a feeling of pain at the evident presence of highly valued goods, which are possible for us to attain, in the possession of those who naturally resemble us — pain not due to the fact that another possess them, but to the fact that we ourselves do not” (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2,11,1). However, the mention of Demetrius here transcends a simple appeal to follow a good example. While displaying a triple attestation of Demetrius’ praiseworthiness, the Elder adds “and you know that our testimony is true” (v. 12b). The Elder establishes his own praiseworthiness in Gaius’ eyes by incidentally bringing up his own relationship and that of his entourage — and thus the common values held and embodied — with the virtuous Demetrius⁽⁷⁴⁾. As in other ancient writings using some rhetorical tools (Seneca, Sirach, and Paul, for instance), 3 John seems to set before Gaius a positive model for his encouragement and to stimulate emulation. By describing Demetrius as a praiseworthy figure, the Elder also associates himself with the honorable side of the conflict (the disgraceful side being embodied by Diotrophes). Gaius is

⁽⁷³⁾ DESILVA, *Honor Discourse*, 24-25. On credible models of behavior, see Thucydides, *History* 2.35. For an example of a list of honorable people, see Sir 44-46, followed by a list of despicable ones (47-49).

⁽⁷⁴⁾ Cf. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1,9,1.

thus invited to: a. imitate a good example; b. consider the Elder an honorable person; and c. dissociate himself from the censurable conduct of Diotrephes. Moreover, as Watson argued, the Elder establishes a connection between Gaius and Demetrius by using the same *topoi* (ἀλήθεια and μαρτυρία) to describe both of them⁽⁷⁵⁾. Demetrius thus becomes a pivotal character through whom Gaius and the Elder are tightly (re-) connected.

f) Graceful and “bridging” remarks (vv. 13-14)

As the papyrus leaf is almost filled, the Elder concludes his letter with a formula practically identical to 2 John 12 and a wish for a visit — a rather common feature in non literary letters⁽⁷⁶⁾. A “bridge to further communication”⁽⁷⁷⁾ has hopefully been built, as the hope remains to talk to Gaius “mouth to mouth”, an expression also found in the conclusion of Second John and borrowed from Num 12,8, where Moses is the only human being to whom God spoke in those terms⁽⁷⁸⁾.

g) Closing Formula (v. 15)

The concluding formula is threefold: “[P]eace to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name” (v. 15). If we suppose that εἰρήνη here replaces the more common ἔρωσο or ἔρωσθε, the threefold formula is well attested⁽⁷⁹⁾.

The wish “peace to you” appears at the beginning of many Jewish letters (cf. 2 Baruch 78,2), and NT epistles (1 Cor 1,3; 2 Cor 1,2; Gal 1,3; Eph 1,2; Phil 1,2; Col 1,2; 1 Thess 1,1; 2 Thess 1,1), and is often combined with grace and/or peace. However, peace and grace are combined at the end of Ephesians (6,23-24), while peace and mercy are found in Gal 6,16. Hence, the peace wish at the end of this letter is neither unique nor unexpected⁽⁸⁰⁾.

More relevant is the mention of the “friends”. Paul used to convey greetings from those who were with him, and greeted those who were

⁽⁷⁵⁾ WATSON, “Rhetorical Analysis”, 499.

⁽⁷⁶⁾ Cf P. Oxy XIV 1666,15-17 (III CE) and P. Mich VIII,481,14-15. KLAUCK, *Ancient Letters*, 38.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ WATSON, “Rhetorical Analysis”, 499.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ KLAUCK, *Ancient Letters*, 39-40. Third John 14 has a Semitic flavor (EDWARDS, *The Johannine Epistles*, 23), as also Num 12,8 LXX, which reads στόμα κατὰ στόμα λαλήσω αὐτῷ.

⁽⁷⁹⁾ E.g., P. Mich. VIII,472,20-21 and P. Mich. III,203,33-35: KLAUCK, *Ancient Letters*, 39-40; BROWN, *John*, 794; DOTY, *Letters*, 10-11.

⁽⁸⁰⁾ Cf. BROWN, *John*, 795.

associated with the letter's recipient (Phil 4,21-22; Titus 3,15). However, the NT never uses the word φίλος to refer to a fellow Christian, except for one instance in John 15,15, where Jesus addresses his disciples as "friends". Despite the questionable relevance of John 15,15 to shed light on 3 John 15, one thing is remarkable: that the very last words of the short letter are still playing an important role in the Elder's attempt to put Gaius under pressure as he decides to stand for John or not.

Up until this point, the letter has clustered a number of elements leading Gaius to acknowledge the Elder's point of view and be sympathetic with the injustice and arrogance he and his emissaries were enduring. The whole persuasive argumentation of the letter is deployed in Gaius' mind. However, the very last words of the letter must have sounded both familiar and demanding, as they showed Gaius that: a. the Elder's friends are also Gaius' friends, and vice versa; b. should Gaius decide to stand against the Elder, he will also stand against his entire entourage⁽⁸¹⁾; c. Gaius is required a certain degree of accountability, as he is asked to greet the "friends" with him. The very last words of the letter constitute a final appeal to do what is good by implicitly hinting at potentially heavy implications of a possible alienation from the Elder and all that he represents.

*
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Third John follows a well established and common pattern in literary and non literary letters and discourses of the first century. To persuade one's audience (using epideictic or deliberative rhetoric), it was necessary to earn good will, strategically arouse positive and negative emotions, assign praise and blame, stimulate emulation and disgust, and use any means to which the audience was sensitive to convince it of the necessity and logic of the suggested course of action.

This paper shows that Third John is not a mere letter of recommendation, but a carefully drafted persuasive discourse in which the Elder intentionally organizes his arguments to guide Gaius step by step in his decisional process. The Elder focuses on the qualitative stasis of the whole issue: the question which the Elder wants Gaius to answer is not whether Diotrephes actually did what he did (conjectural stasis), nor does the Elder expect Gaius to define what Diotrephes did

⁽⁸¹⁾ This second point has already been seen by WATSON, "Rhetorical Analysis", 500.

(definitional stasis). Instead, the Elder's intent is to focus Gaius' attention on the following question: was what Diotrephes did just and expedient⁽⁸²⁾?

The Elder leads Gaius to consider Diotrephes as someone who was supposed to do something honorable and good (namely, be hospitable to and supportive of the Elder's emissaries), but shamefully failed to do so. As Aristotle put it:

"...we feel shame at such bad things as we think are disgraceful to ourselves or to those we care for. These evils are, in the first place, those due to moral badness... [such as] giving less help than you might, or none at all..." (*Rhet.* 2,6)⁽⁸³⁾.

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SUMMARY

Previous studies argue that the Elder composed the letter to recommend Demetrius to Gaius, and that Third John therefore falls into the "letter of recommendation" genre. After assessing the differences between common letters of recommendation and Third John, this study examines the rhetoric of Third John in an attempt to show that it is not a letter of recommendation, but rather an epideictic rhetorical attempt to restore the Elder's honor (discredited by Diotrephes) in Gaius' eyes and persuade him to detach himself from Diotrephes' reprehensible behavior by extending hospitality to the Elder's envoys.

⁽⁸²⁾ Cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 7,1,7-8; Cicero, *Part. or.* 12,42a.

⁽⁸³⁾ Cf. also 1 John 3,17: "But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (NASB).

Gottes Doppelrolle in Ijob 16

Zu den zahlreichen extremen Aussagen in der Ijob-Dichtung gehören auch die Formulierungen mit “Feind” für die Beziehung Ijobs zu seinem Gott. Einerseits erlebt er sich selber als Gottes Feind: In Ijob 19,11 klagt Ijob, dass Gott ihn “wie zu seinen Feinden rechne (וַיַּחֲשֶׁבֵנִי לִזְרָאִי)”. Ähnlich in 13,24: “Warum verbirgst du dein Antlitz und rechnest mich als deinen Feind (לֹאֵיב)?” Dass diese kühne Aussage bereits innerhalb des Ijobbuchs auf Widerspruch stösst, zeigt in 33,10 die Wiederaufnahme durch Elihu, welcher letztere Aussage Ijobs zitiert und als eine Entgleisung tadelt.

Andrerseits wird ebenfalls Gott als Ijobs Feind genannt. In 16,9-14 klagt Ijob über Gottes Zorn, der ihn “zerreisst” (wie ein Raubtier) und “anfeindet” (שָׂטָן). Wie ein Ringkämpfer packt Gott Ijob, schiesst auf ihn wie ein Bogenschütze und rennt gegen ihn an wie ein Kriegsheld. In diesem Kontext göttlicher Angriffe begegnet die Formulierung “mein Feind” (צָרִי V. 9). Wiederum zeigt sich bereits innerhalb der Ijob-Dichtung deutlicher Widerstand: In der darauf folgenden Rede Bildads wird Ijobs Klage über Gottes zerreisenden Zorn umgebogen zu einer Anklage gegen Ijob, der sich selber in seinem Zorn unnötigerweise zerreisse (18,4).

Der Dichter des Ijob-Buches bringt diese extrem formulierte Anklage mit Bedacht an einer kompositorisch entscheidenden Stelle des Buches, nämlich recht genau in der Mitte der drei Redegänge zwischen Ijob und seinen drei Freunden⁽¹⁾. Diese mittlere Ijob-Rede des mittleren Redegangs fällt in doppelter Weise auf: einerseits durch eine besonders heftige Anklage Gottes (Ijob 16,7-14), und andererseits durch ein erstaunliches “Bekenntnis der Zuversicht” Ijobs an “seinen Zeugen im Himmel”, der ihm bei Gott Recht verschaffen wird (VV. 19-21). Diese beiden Aussagen, deren logische Zusammengehörigkeit

⁽¹⁾ Vorausgesetzt wird dabei, dass die drei Redegänge je mit einer Rede Ijobs beginnen; vgl. die Begründung bei G. FOHRER, *Das Buch Hiob* (KAT; Gütersloh 1963) 34. Anders die gross angelegte Untersuchung von M. KÖHLMOOS, *Das Auge Gottes. Textstrategie im Hiobbuch* (FAT 25; Tübingen 1999), deren inhaltlichen Ergebnisse vielfach mit literarkritischer Argumentation verhängt sind, was zu umfangreichen Text-Ausscheidungen führt.

nicht auf den ersten Blick einsichtig ist, sind sozusagen als zwei Brennpunkte einer Ellipse zu betrachten⁽²⁾.

1. *Ijobs Klage (VV. 7-14) als erster Brennpunkt*

Während die Klage sich zu Beginn eher noch innerhalb des für diese Gattung gewohnten Rahmens bewegt, so steigert sich deren Exzessivität ab V. 9 deutlich. Ijobs Formulierungen über Gottes aggressives Tun soll hier im Einzelnen betrachtet und mit anderen Äußerungen aus Israel und dem alten Orient verglichen werden.

- a) “Sein Zorn hat (mich) zerrissen” (V. 9): Die Wurzel טרף bezieht sich an fast allen Stellen auf die Aktivität eines Raubtiers⁽³⁾. Zuweilen ist auch JHWH Subjekt solchen Zerreißens; so erscheint er etwa bei Hosea als raubgieriger Löwe⁽⁴⁾.
- b) Das angefangene Kolon endet mit “und befeindete mich”: Das vorangegangene Subjekt “(Gottes) Zorn” scheint für “befeinden” schlecht zu passen. Gleichwohl ist hier — in nächster Analogie zu שׂם in Ijobs Abschlussrede 30,21 — Gott als Handelnder anzunehmen⁽⁵⁾, da innerhalb desselben Kolons kein Wechsel zu einem menschlichen Subjekt denkbar ist.
- c) “Er (mein Feind?) knirschte mit den Zähnen gegen mich”: Wiederum stellt sich die Frage nach dem Subjekt. צרִי “mein Feind” steht in Pivot-Stellung, d.h. in der Mitte zwischen dem zweiten und dritten Kolon von V. 9, und ist daher auf beide Kola zu beziehen. Im Weiteren stellt sich die Frage, ob dieser Feind Gott oder ein Mensch ist⁽⁶⁾. Das Verbum חָרַס “knirschen, (die Zähne) fletschen”

⁽²⁾ Von der Spannung zwischen zwei Polen redete bereits C. WESTERMANN, *Der Aufbau des Buches Hiob* (CThM.BW 6; Stuttgart 1978) 68. Neulich wieder S. BALENTINE, *Job* (Smyth & Helwis Bible Commentary; Macon, GA 2006) 264.

⁽³⁾ טרף mit Erwähnung eines Raubtiers: Gen 37,33; 44,28; 49,9.27; Ex 22,12; Num 23,24; Jes 5,29; 31,4; Jer 5,6; Ez 19,3.6; 22,25.27; Am 3,4; Mi 5,7; Nah 2,13; Ps 7,3; 17,12; 22,14; 104,21; Ijob 4,11; 38,39. — טרף mit “Zorn” als Subjekt: Ijob 16,9; 18,4 (Ijobs Zorn); Dtn 33,20 (Gad ist wie ein Löwe); Am 1,11 (Edom).

⁽⁴⁾ Hos 5,14; 6,1. Ferner ohne formulierten Tiervergleich Ps 50,22. Ohne טרף vgl. Kgl 3,10-11. JHWH erscheint auch sonst zuweilen mit Aktivitäten eines Löwen (Ijob 10,16; 38,39): er “brüllt” vom Zion (vgl. z.B. Am 1,2; Hos 11,10) oder kommt aus dem Dickicht (Jer 25,38; Ps 76,3). Analog werden mesopotamische Gottheiten und Dämonen als wilde Löwen bezeichnet und geschildert (Belege in CAD N 195 und L 24-25).

⁽⁵⁾ Ijob 30,21: “Du wandelst dich mir zum Grausamen; mit gewaltiger Hand befeindest du mich”. Menschen sind Subjekt von שׂם in Gen 27,41; 49,23; 50,15; Ps 55,4 (“im Zorn”).

⁽⁶⁾ Zu Gott als Feind vgl. noch Jes 63,10; Jer 30,14; Kgl 2,4-5.

ist im Alten Testament sonst nie mit göttlichem Subjekt belegt⁽⁷⁾. Hingegen knirschen mesopotamische Gottheiten (und auch Dämonen) öfters mit ihren Zähnen gegen ihre Gegner, wie sich aus Epen und Hymnen belegen lässt⁽⁸⁾.

- d) “Mein Feind schärft/wetzt seine Augen gegen⁽⁹⁾ mich” (V. 9b): לְעֵינַי wird sonst stets für das Schärfen von Waffen verwendet⁽¹⁰⁾. Die Verbindung mit “Augen” ist eine aussergewöhnliche und kühne Formulierung⁽¹¹⁾, welche als extreme Aussage über Gott verstanden werden darf. Bereits in 7,19 hatte Ijob gewünscht, dass Gott endlich einmal von ihm wegschaue, wenigstens so lange, bis er seinen Speichel hinuntergeschluckt habe. — Somit kann also der ganze V. 9 als Aussage über Gottes Aktivitäten verstanden werden, wie dies auch bereits für die vorangegangenen Verse 7-8 gilt.
- e) Nachdem im folgenden V. 10 menschliche Gegner handelndes Subjekt sind, werden solche menschlichen Aktivitäten in V. 11 auf Gott als Verursacher und Beauftragenden zurückgeführt⁽¹²⁾: “Ausgeliefert hat mich El dem Ruchlosen”⁽¹³⁾. Erst hier wird Gott erstmals namentlich als Subjekt seiner unerträglichen Aktivitäten genannt, nachdem er zuvor nur verborgenes Subjekt war. Es scheint hier eine bewusste Steigerung des Ijob-Dichters vorzuliegen: Innerhalb der Formulierungen über Gott in der 3. Person begegnet zunächst kurz die direkte Anrede in der 2. Person

⁽⁷⁾ Menschliche Gegner als Subjekt von חָרַק : Ps 35,16; 37,12; 112,10; Klg 2,16.

⁽⁸⁾ Siehe CAD G 52-53 und AHW I 457 mit Belegen zu *g/kašāšu*. Beispiele: Ishtar im Aguschaja-Lied B II 20: siehe TUAT II 738 und vgl. B. GRONEBERG, *Lob der Ištar*. Gebet und Ritual an die altbabylonische Venusgöttin (CM 8; Groningen 1997) 85 sowie 24-25 (weiterer Ishtar-Hymnus); Enlil — S. MAUL, ‘*Herzberuhigungsklagen*’. Die sumerisch-akkadischen Ersahungs-Gebete (Wiesbaden 1988) 102; Adad — S. MAUL, *Herzberuhigungsklagen*, 144; Anzu — Anzu-Mythus II 37 in zwei Fassungen, siehe COS III Nr. 147. — Eventuell zu vergleichen ist ugaritisch *šnn* (Keret-Epos KTU 1.16 I,13; II,35 = TUAT III 241).

⁽⁹⁾ Zum hier vorliegenden *Lamed applicationis* siehe E. JENNI, *Die hebräischen Präpositionen* (Stuttgart 2000) III, 117, 124.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Gen 4,22; 1 Sam 13,20; Ps 7,13; 52,4. Dieselbe Wurzel begegnet auch im Ugaritischen im Kontext des Schwertes (KTU 1.2 I 32 = TUAT III 1122-1123).

⁽¹¹⁾ Die englische Sprache kennt eine vergleichbare Ausdrucksweise: *to look daggers*.

⁽¹²⁾ Es erscheint mir deshalb als unnötig, dass manche Kommentatoren (z.B. G. FOHRER, *Hiob*, z.St.) V. 10-11 als spätere Hinzufügung ausscheiden wollen.

⁽¹³⁾ Zu beachten sind die Assonanzen auf ל und weitere durative Konsonanten in V. 11.

(VV. 7b.8a)⁽¹⁴⁾; später ist von “seinem (zerstörerischen) Zorn” die Rede (V. 9a) und taucht darauf die Bezeichnung Gottes als “mein Feind” auf (V. 9b). Jedoch namentlich (mittels der Gottesbezeichnung El) wird Gott erst in V. 12 genannt. Ijob muss also erst einen Weg zurücklegen, bis er es wagt, mit einer direkten Formulierung Gott als seinen Feind zu benennen.

- f) “Ich lebte ruhig, da hat er mich erschüttert” (V. 12): Das Verbum פָּרַר II wird sonst nur noch in mythischen Aussagen verwendet und bezeichnet Gottes Erschüttern der Erde (Jes 24,19) bzw. des Meeres (Ps 74,13). Formal fallen in VV. 12a und 14 reiche Assonanzen mit פ and ר auf, die durch reduplizierte Pilpel-Formen und weitere Formulierungen gebildet werden. Dies führt zu einer weiteren Intensivierung der Aussage.
- g) “Er packte mich an meinem Genick und zerschmetterte mich”: Auch פָּצַץ “zerschmettern” ist sonst nur in massiven und wohl mythischen Formulierungen belegt (in Hab 3,6 werden die ewigen Berge zerschmettert; und in Jer 23,29 ist das Wort JHWHs wie ein Hammer, der Felsen zerschlägt). Gott erscheint allerdings Ijob 16 eher im Bild eines brutalen Ringkämpfers.
- h) Die nächsten vier Kola werden formal zusammengehalten durch acht Assonanzen auf ל sowie inhaltlich durch das Bild des Bogenschützen (VV. 12b-13). Dieses Bild wird auch sonst im Alten Testament auf Gott angewandt⁽¹⁵⁾. Öfters ist es mythisch gefärbt, wie es so ebenfalls im Alten Orient weit verbreitet ist. Einige der Formulierungen in VV. 12-13 sind allerdings aussergewöhnlich. — “Er stellte mich als Zielscheibe auf” (V. 12b) findet sich so noch in Klgl 3,12 sowie – mit einem andern Lexem für “Zielscheibe” – auch in Ijob 7,20.
- i) “Er durchlöchert⁽¹⁶⁾ meine Nieren schonungslos” ist eine singuläre Formulierung, die sich sonst nirgends im Alten Orient findet. Dass

⁽¹⁴⁾ Zum unterschiedlichen Charakter der Aussagen in 2. und 3. Person vgl. A. MICHEL, “Das Gewalthandeln Gottes nach den Ijobreden”, *Das Buch Ijob. Gesamtdeutungen – Einzeltexte – Zentrale Themen* (Hrsg. T. SEIDL u.a.) (ÖBS 31; Frankfurt 2007) 216. Er beurteilt die Anrede in 2. Person als “doch wohl abmildernden Modus des Dialogs”. Doch ist das Gegenteil ebenso plausibel: Ijob wagt die extremen Aussagen ab V. 9 bloss in der distanzierteren Form der 3. Person.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Siehe z.B. Num 24,8; Dtn 32,23.42; Hab 3,11; Sach 9,14; Ps 18,15; 38,3; 64,8; 144,6; Ijob 6,4; Klgl 3,12-13.

⁽¹⁶⁾ פָּלַח *pi*; siehe E. JENNI, *Das hebräische Piʿel*. Syntaktisch-semasiologische Untersuchung einer Verbalform im Alten Testament (Zürich 1968) 180.

Gott so an Ijobs Nieren handelt, die im Alten Testament als Sitz der innersten Gefühle gelten, geht weit über das (in Ps und Jer belegte) "Prüfen" der Nieren hinaus⁽¹⁷⁾.

- j) "Er schüttet meine Galle zu Boden" (V. 13b) ist ebenfalls singulär. Vielleicht darf man hinweisen auf die akkadische Wendung "Galle erbrechen". Diese findet sich als Ausdruck für eine extreme Verzweiflung einerseits in mythischen Texten, und andererseits bezeichnen königliche Annalen so die Reaktion von hoffnungslos gewordenen besieigten Feinden⁽¹⁸⁾.
- k) "Bresche um Bresche schlägt er in mich; er rennt gegen mich an wie ein Kriegsheld" (V. 14): Der feindliche Angriff gegen Ijob intensiviert sich: Nach den Bogenschützen, die noch aus einer gewissen Distanz agierten, kommen nun die Pioniere des Nahkampfs⁽¹⁹⁾. Das Bild des heranstürmenden Kriegshelden wurde bereits von Eliphas in seiner vorangehenden Rede verwendet, dort allerdings in Bezug auf den Frevler, der vergeblich gegen Gott anrennt (15,26). Ijob jedoch kehrt das Bild um: Nunmehr ist es Gott selber, der erfolgreich gegen Ijob anstürmt. Gott als herzu-eilender Kriegsheld (גִּבּוֹר) ist ein geläufiges Bild, allerdings sonst immer in positiver Konnotation als göttliches Rettungshandeln (Jes 42,13; Ps 19,6; 78,65). Doch Ijob leidet unter diesem Kriegshelden.

So entfalten VV. 7-14 Ijobs Anklage gegen Gott in vielfältigen und massiven Metaphern. Dabei bietet sich für derart extreme Formulierungen vielfach die mythische Sprache an, weil diese sich dank ihrer Elementarität als besonders aussagekräftiges Ausdrucksmittel erweist. Existentiell so irritierende Erfahrungen wie Ijobs Ausgeliefertsein an einen unverständlichen und grausam verletzenden Gott lassen sich am ehesten in mythischen Bildern zum Ausdruck bringen. Insofern ist diese Sprache nicht "nur" metaphorisch, sondern im tiefsten Sinn elementar und deshalb auch realistisch.

Im Vergleich zu den Klagepsalmen unterscheiden sich Ijobs Klagen — abgesehen davon, dass Gott selten in der 2. Person direkt angesprochen wird — weniger grundsätzlich als vielmehr in der exzessiven Intensität der Aussage. Während die Psalmen Gottes Ferne

⁽¹⁷⁾ Unserer Ijob-Stelle am nächsten kommt Klg 1,13: "In meine Nieren liess er (JHWH) eindringen die Söhne seines Köchers".

⁽¹⁸⁾ Belege in CAD M 437.

⁽¹⁹⁾ D. CLINES, *Job 1-20* (WBC 17; Dallas, TX 1989) 385.

(sein Schweigen, Verbergen des Antlitzes usw.) beklagen, klagt Ijob umgekehrt über Gottes bedrängende und zerstörerische Nähe⁽²⁰⁾.

2. *Ijobs Bekenntnis der Zuversicht (VV. 19-21) als zweiter Brennpunkt*

Das “Bekenntnis der Zuversicht” ist auffälligerweise im Ijobbuch bedeutend seltener belegt als etwa in den Klage-Psalmen. Ausführlich findet sich ein solches Bekenntnis nur zweimal, und zwar innerhalb derjenigen zwei Ijob-Reden, welche gleichzeitig die extremsten Anklagen gegen Gott als Ijobs Feind enthalten, d.h. in 16,19-21 und 19,25-27. Im Weiteren fällt auf, wie isoliert die beiden Bekenntnisse innerhalb dieser Reden erscheinen — zumindest auf den ersten Blick scheint dies so. Denn anschliessend geht die Klage in grosser Intensität weiter, als ob Ijobs Zuversicht bereits wieder vergessen wäre.

Nun wäre es allerdings falsch, ein Gefälle zu konstruieren im Sinne eines Glaubens-Höhepunkts im Bekenntnis der Zuversicht einerseits und eines Niedergangs in der darauf folgenden, scheinbar hoffnungslosen Klage andererseits. Dadurch würde die Dringlichkeit der Situation verkannt: Ijob riskiert, vorzeitig zu sterben, bevor sein Appell bei Gott Erhörung findet. Wenn Ijob am Schluss seiner Rede das Totenreich als seine “Hoffnung” bezeichnet (17,13-16), so ist dies kein Ausdruck von Resignation, sondern eine ebenso polemische wie eindringlich realistische Erklärung dessen, was für Ijob auf dem Spiele steht. Es handelt sich um ironische Sprache in polemischer Absicht.

In diesem so kämpferischen Kontext ist Ijobs Bekenntnis der Zuversicht zu verstehen: “Auch jetzt (noch), siehe im Himmel ist mein Zeuge (עֵד) / und mein Zeuge (שֹׁדֵדִי = aramäisch) in den Höhen” (16,19). Bereits ab V. 17 findet sich die Sprache des Rechts: Nach der Erklärung der eigenen Unschuld (V.17) folgt der Appell an die Erde, Ijobs Blut nicht zuzudecken und seinen Zeterruf nicht zur Ruhe kommen zu lassen (V.18; vgl. Gen 4,10). Denselben Ziel dient nun auch der “Zeuge im Himmel” (V. 19). Ein עֵד hat die Pflicht, das von ihm Gesehene zu bestätigen. Er wird dadurch, je nach Umständen, zum Anwalt des Unschuldigen oder zum Ankläger des Schuldigen.

Wer ist dieser Zeuge? In der Auslegung ist umstritten: Ist hier Gott selber gemeint? Oder ist an eine untergeordnete himmlische Mittler-Gestalt zu denken⁽²¹⁾, wie dies bereits Elihu in 33,23-26 voraussetzt?

⁽²⁰⁾ Nur einmal findet sich in Ps 39,14 auch die umgekehrte Bitte, dass JHWH vom Beter wegblicken möge (vgl. Ijob 7,19; 14,6).

⁽²¹⁾ So neulich wieder KÖHLMÖS, *Auge Gottes*, 241-242 sowie BALENTINE, *Job*, 259.

Doch spricht der Kontext m.E. deutlich dafür, dass Ijob hier Gott selber meint⁽²²⁾. In 17,3 geht es, diesmal im rechtlichen Ausdruck der Bürgschaft⁽²³⁾, um ein Geschehen zwischen Ijob und Gott allein: Nur Gott kann “den Handschlag” für Ijob leisten, nachdem die Menschen (und auch Ijobs Freunde) ihn im Stich lassen und sogar verspotten (V. 2). Wenn also laut 16,21 der “Zeuge/Anwalt” ein Schlichter (מוֹדֵיחַ) zwischen zwei Parteien (Gott und Mensch, oder Mensch und Mensch) sein soll, so erhält Gott hier mehr als eine einzige Rolle: Ijob appelliert an Gott, der gleichzeitig Angeklagter, Anwalt und Bürge für Ijob ist. Dieser scheinbar unlogische Sachverhalt mag uns erstaunen, doch entspricht er der aussergewöhnlichen Situation Ijobs, der in einer monotheistischen Geistigkeit lebt und sich in seinem unschuldigen Leiden und in seiner Isolation deshalb ausschliesslich an Gott wenden kann.

Ein knapper Seitenblick zu Ijobs nächstfolgender Rede in Kap. 19 zeigt Analoges und gleichzeitig eine deutliche Steigerung gegenüber Kap. 16. Wiederum ist das Verhältnis zwischen Gott und der Gestalt, die hier אֱלֹהִים genannt wird, nicht auf Anhieb klar. Und wiederum wird in der Klage die Beziehung zwischen Ijob und Gott als feindschaftlich bezeichnet. Dass Gott Ijob “zu seinen Feinden rechnet” (19,11), wird nun allerdings in eine andere Richtung entfaltet, nämlich im Blick auf Ijobs völlige Isolation gegenüber den Mitmenschen (Grossfamilie und Freunde). Die Rede schliesst mit einer Warnung an seine Freunde, ihn nicht weiter zu quälen, weil es auch über sie einen Richter gibt. Dabei erscheint das Bekenntnis der Zuversicht — anders als in Kap. 16-17 — erst kurz vor dem Ende der Rede und ins schier Unerträgliche gesteigert: Ijob ist sich seines אֱלֹהִים gewiss, der allerdings erst als Letzter (אֲחֵרִים) auftreten wird, so dass der geschundene Ijob “ohne Fleisch (מִבְּשָׂר)”⁽²⁴⁾ Gott schauen” kann. Die Exegese dieses visionären und nur in Andeutungen formulierten Bekenntnisses hat zu den unterschiedlichsten Ergebnissen geführt: Erwartet Ijob die grundlegende Wende noch zu seinen Lebzeiten (ohne Fleisch, aber mit Haut und

⁽²²⁾ Mit anderen Argumenten kommt zum selben Resultat H. IRSIGLER, “Ijobs letzte Hoffnung. 16,18-22 und 19,23-27 im Kontext der Ijobdichtung”, *Sprachliche Tiefe – theologische Weite* (Hrsg. O. DYMA u.a.) (BThSt 91; Neukirchen 2008) 159-161.

⁽²³⁾ Leider ist MT in 17,3 nicht völlig klar. Siehe die Übersetzung der (textkritisch sehr konservativen) “Elberfelder Bibel”: “Setze doch [ein Pfand] ein, leiste Bürgschaft für mich! Wer sonst wird in meine Hand einschlagen?”

⁽²⁴⁾ Ebenfalls möglich ist die Übersetzung “von meinem Fleisch aus”, was für das Verständnis des Verses weniger Probleme gäbe.

Knochen)⁽²⁵⁾, oder erst nach seinem Tod? Oder ist sein Bekenntnis gar ironisch gemeint als Vorwurf, dass Gott für ihn zu spät kommt? Letztere Entscheidung vertritt vor allem Köhlmoos⁽²⁶⁾; doch wird selbst bei ihrem Verständnis die Aussage Ijobs nicht etwa spannungslos, sondern die Spannung verlagert sich auf die literarische Ebene der Textstrategie, insofern als die Erwartung eines göttlichen Eingreifens sich nunmehr von (einem hoffnungslos-verzweifelt erscheinenden) Ijob weg auf das Lese- bzw. Hör-Publikum der Ijob-Dichtung verschiebt⁽²⁷⁾.

3. Zur gegenseitigen Bezogenheit der beiden Brennpunkte

Das in Kap. 16 und 19 beobachtete Spannungsverhältnis zwischen exzessiver Klage und ebenso exzessiver Vertrauensäußerung ist nicht nur innerhalb des Ijob-Buches etwas Einzigartiges, sondern ebenfalls im Vergleich zu den Klagepsalmen. In den Psalmen begegnet das "Bekenntnis der Zuversicht" üblicherweise erst kurz vor dem Schluss des Gebets und lässt die vorherige Klage als überwunden erscheinen, zumal wenn es — wie z.B. in Ps 13,6 — mit einem Lobgelübde kombiniert wird. Und wo Vertrauensäußerungen inmitten des Gebets begegnen, so sind sie mit den Bitten (und nicht mit der Klage wie in Ijob 16,18b.22)⁽²⁸⁾ verbunden und als allgemeine Erfahrungen formuliert. Darum kann es hier nicht zu einem vergleichbaren Spannungsverhältnis kommen.

Wie wenig selbstverständlich das Zusammenspiel der beiden oben beobachteten Brennpunkte sind, zeigt u.a. die Auslegungsgeschichte des Ijob-Buches. Bereits die Septuaginta verschiebt im Reden-Teil das Interesse generell weg von der exzessiven Klage hin zu einer idealisierten Geduld Ijobs. In allen antiken Übersetzungen lassen sich Abmilderungen der Anklage Gottes beobachten, weil bei der Wiedergabe von 16,7-14 offenbar eine blasphemische Aussage vermieden werden soll. So ändern sie z.B. שׂטן "anfeinden" (V. 9) als Haltung Gottes ab zur (wohl zeitlich begrenzt gedachten) Aktivität

⁽²⁵⁾ So kürzlich wieder IRSIGLER, "Ijobs letzte Hoffnung", 177.

⁽²⁶⁾ KÖHLMOOS, *Auge Gottes*, 277 verneint das Vorliegen einer Hoffnungsaussage Ijobs; "ohne sein Fleisch" meine "jenseits des Todes, also gar nicht".

⁽²⁷⁾ KÖHLMOOS, *Auge Gottes*, 278.

⁽²⁸⁾ Auch 19,25-27 folgt nicht auf eine Bitte, sondern auf eine Klage. Die zweimalige Einleitung durch die Wendung הִנֵּנִי הֵן in V. 23 ist als Irrealis zu verstehen.

“niederwerfen”, “ausrufen” oder “drohen”⁽²⁹⁾. Oder sie weichen harte Aussagen über Gott auf zu Aussagen über menschliche Gegner⁽³⁰⁾. Hingegen passen Vertrauensaussagen gut zur Konzeption der antiken Übersetzungen, welche einen demütig-ergebenen Ijob favorisieren. Doch das Spannungsverhältnis ist wegen der Abmilderung des ersten Brennpunkts deutlich geschwächt.

Eine ähnliche Tendenz lässt sich beobachten in der rabbinischen Beschäftigung mit Kap. 16 und 19 in Talmud und Midrasch Rabba⁽³¹⁾: Generell werden hier Ijobs Klagen kritisch beurteilt, ja vielfach getadelt⁽³²⁾. Die Anklage Gottes in 16,7-14 wird in ganz anderer Richtung ausgelegt⁽³³⁾; und zu den beiden Bekenntnissen 16,19-21 und 19,25-27 fehlen Äusserungen in diesen Schriften⁽³⁴⁾. Weil die Rabbinen mehr von Gott und dessen guten Zielen her denken, spielt hier die Spannung zwischen Ijobs extremer Klage und seinem Bekenntnis der Zuversicht keine Rolle. Überhaupt eignet sich nach der Meinung der Rabbinen die Gestalt Abrahams besser für die Darstellung eines mustergültig Leidenden; Abraham richtet seine ganze Zuversicht positiv auf Gott, ohne so rebellisch zu klagen wie Ijob.

⁽²⁹⁾ LXX κατέλιπέν με; Peschitta ܕܥܠܝܝܐ; Vulgata *comminans* “drohend”. – Gott als Subjekt von ܕܥܠܝܝܐ findet sich auch noch in Ijobs Abschlussrede 30,21; hier sind die Übersetzungen schärfer (LXX ἐμᾶστιγώσας; Peschitta ܕܥܠܝܝܐ; Vulgata *adversaris mihi*).

⁽³⁰⁾ Symmachus und Peschitta (vgl. LXX^{ms}) in V. 9b; LXX (vgl. auch Aquila und Theodotion) in Vv. 13b-14. Sie gehen damit weit über den MT hinaus, der die Formulierungen mit göttlichem Subjekt in V. 10 mit Aussagen über menschliche Feinde Ijobs unterbricht und ab V. 11 wieder zu göttlichen Aktivitäten zurückkehrt.

⁽³¹⁾ Konkordanzmässige Grundlage der folgenden Untersuchung ist die Software der “Davka Corporation” (www.davka.com): *Soncino Classics Edition* und *The Judaic Classics Deluxe Edition* (jeweils Version 1.2, 2007).

⁽³²⁾ Siehe die Zusammenstellung rabbinischer Urteile in bBB 15a-16b. – Ein bedenkenswerter Versuch, diese Ijob-kritische Ausrichtung “seelsorgerlich” aus der historischen Situation des damaligen Judentums zu begründen, findet sich bei G. OBERHÄNSLI-WIDMER, *Hiob in jüdischer Antike und Moderne*. Die Wirkungsgeschichte Hiobs in der jüdischen Literatur (Neukirchen 2003) 172-173.

⁽³³⁾ Dass Ijob trotz geschädigter Galle und Niere weiterleben kann, ist ein Wunder (bHul 43b). In GenR 30,8 (und vgl. EstR 6,3) richtet sich das Interesse mehr auf Gottes wunderbares Ziel anstatt auf Ijobs Anklage. In den Gleichnissen von ExR 21,7 und GenR 57,4 steht im Zentrum Gottes Heil für Israel; diesem Ziel hat sich Ijobs (stellvertretendes?) Leiden unterzuordnen. Zu diesen Gleichnissen vgl. C. THOMA & S. LAUER, *Die Gleichnisse der Rabbinen* (Judaica et Christiana 13; Bern etc. 1991) II, 313-315.

⁽³⁴⁾ Lediglich der Psalmen-Midrasch (MTeh 9,7 zu Ps 9,5) zitiert die Wendung עֲדִי יְשׁוּעָה, jedoch im Kontext des Strafgerichts an Israel.

Während wir also in der frühen Rezeptionsgeschichte der Ijob-Dichtung vergeblich nach einer Spannung zwischen den obigen beiden Brennpunkten suchen, so finden wir andererseits in altorientalischen Texten durchaus ein Spannungsverhältnis zwischen dem "feindlichen" und dem "rettenden" Aspekt einer Gottheit. Den hier begegnenden Ähnlichkeiten und Unterschieden zur Ijobdichtung soll nun nachgegangen werden. Dabei sind einerseits die akkadischen Gebete und Gebetsbeschwörungen sowie andererseits Dichtungen wie z.B. "*Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*" und die so genannte "Babylonische Theodizee" zu betrachten.

Zunächst fällt auf, dass vorwurfsvolle Anklagen an die Gottheit in Mesopotamien nicht üblich sind⁽³⁵⁾. Zwar sind den betenden Menschen die Erfahrungen einer aggressiv-zerstörerischen Gottheit geläufig. Wenn die Gottheit als Subjekt solcher leidvoller Erfahrungen genannt wird, geschieht dies jedoch nicht in Form von Klagen, sondern ausschliesslich in hymnischen Formulierungen. Dabei erscheinen die zornig-vernichtenden und die wohlwollend-helfenden Aktivitäten derselben Gottheit häufig nebeneinander im gleichen Text. Vor allem in Texten der Marduk-Frömmigkeit kann die Schilderung gegensätzlicher Charakterzüge in bewusster Symmetrie formuliert werden⁽³⁶⁾. Das bekannteste Beispiel ist der 40-zeilige Hymnus, der die Dichtung "*Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*" eröffnet, wobei sich der Lobpreis des Zorns und der Hilfe von Zeile zu Zeile abzuwechseln pflegt⁽³⁷⁾. Dadurch erhalten die gegensätzlichen Aspekte der ambivalenten Gottheit eine Gleichwertigkeit⁽³⁸⁾, die letztlich ein Span-

⁽³⁵⁾ W.R. MAYER, *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der akkadischen "Gebetsbeschwörungen"* (Rom 1976) 106-108 kann nur ganz wenige Belege nennen, die jedoch gemässigt sind als die Formulierungen in den alttestamentlichen Psalmen. — Die Dichtung "*Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*" vermeidet tunlichst jeglichen Vorwurf an Marduk.

⁽³⁶⁾ Anders verhält es sich bei Ishtar, deren gegensätzliche Aspekte ohne logische Verbindung genannt werden. Beispiele in B. GRONEBERG, *Lob der Ištar*. Gebet und Ritual an die altbabylonische Venusgöttin (CM 8; Groningen 1997).

⁽³⁷⁾ Ein interessantes Beispiel ist auch der in Ugarit gefundene akkadische Marduk-Hymnus (R.S. 25.460), der aussergewöhnlicherweise in *TUAT* zweimal übersetzt wird (III 140-143 durch W.v. Soden; II 823-826 durch M. Dietrich); bezeichnend sind die gegensätzlichen Titel durch die Übersetzer: "Klage eines Dulders mit Gebet an Marduk" (v. Soden) bzw. "Lobgesang auf die Heilkunst Marduks" (Dietrich).

⁽³⁸⁾ So auch M. FRANZ, *Der barmherzige und gnädige Gott*. Die Gnadenrede vom Sinai (Exodus 34,6-7) und ihre Parallelen im Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt (BWANT 160; Stuttgart 2003) 56.

nungsverhältnis neutralisiert. Ijob jedenfalls kämpft einen anderen Kampf mit seinem Gott. Für ihn steht die Rettung noch aus, wogegen sie in den akkadischen Hymnen als generalisierend formulierte Erfahrung gepriesen wird.

Die mythische Sprache, die in der Ijobs Klage 16,7-14 zu beobachten ist, findet sich ebenfalls in akkadischen Klagen, allerdings dort nur in beschränktem Umfang (in der "Babylonischen Theodizee" fehlt sie ganz). So schildert der Dulder in "*Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*", dass seine Kopfschmerzen "aus der Unterwelt emporwachsen" (Tafel II) und schlussendlich dank Marduk wieder dorthin zurückkehren (Tafel III)⁽³⁹⁾. Oder der ehemalige Freundeskreis wird mit einer dämonisierenden Deutungs-Kategorie versehen, indem der Freund (*ibru*) zu einem *gallû*-Dämon geworden ist (I 85).

Besonders interessant für einen Vergleich mit der Ijob-Dichtung ist die Beachtung der Chaoskampf-Thematik. Dabei können wir uns auf die sorgfältige Untersuchung von Gisela Fuchs (1993) stützen. Fuchs findet — gerade auch in Ijob 16,9-14 — vor allem Anspielungen auf den Chaoskampf-Mythus⁽⁴⁰⁾. Dabei erfahre sich Ijob einerseits von der Chaosmacht bedrängt, wie das Bild des zornigen Raubtiers zeige (V. 9), und wie es in V. 11 mit der Wurzel ערל direkt ausgesprochen werde. Andererseits erlebe sich Ijob ebenso bedrängt vom Besieger des Chaos, wie die Bilder des siegreichen Pfeilschützen und Kriegshelden in VV. 12-14 zeigen. Fuchs schliesst daraus: "Für Ijob sind die feindlichen Parteien des Chaoskampfes auswechselbar; die Welt ist für ihn nur noch Chaos!" Allerdings liegt die Auswechselbarkeit wohl bereits bei den Metaphern selbst⁽⁴¹⁾. Jedenfalls begegnet das Motiv des Zorns nicht nur bei der Chaosmacht, wie dies Fuchs unter Hinweis auf Tiamats Zorn gegenüber Marduk in der 4. Tafel von *Enūma eliš* belegt. Ebenso zornig werden jedoch auch siegreiche Gottheiten, die — wie

⁽³⁹⁾ II 52 sowie Fragment Si 55, rev. 5' in W.G. LAMBERT, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford 1960) 52; zu beachten sind die gegensinnigen mythischen Formulierungen *išid šamē* und *irat eršetim*.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ G. FUCHS, *Mythos und Hiobdichtung*. Aufnahme und Umdeutung altorientalischer Vorstellungen (Stuttgart 1993) 86-87. — Vergleiche die Formulierungen z.B. bei Anats Sieg über Mot in KTU 1.6 II,32-35 (= TUAT III 1190), ferner bei Marduks Sieg über Tiamat (*En.el.* VI,101-102.130.137 = TUAT III 586-587).

⁽⁴¹⁾ In 29,17 beschreibt Ijob sich selbst mit den Ausdrücken eines Chaoskämpfers: "Ich zerschmetterte dem Frevler (ערל) den Kiefer und entriss seinen Zähnen den Raub (פרד)." —

oben erwähnt — mit den Zähnen knirschen. Und Ijob traut Gott zu, sowohl Schöpfer wie auch Rückverwandler ins Chaos zu sein (9,5-14).

Auch in akkadischen Klagen begegnet das Chaoskampfmotiv, allerdings nicht sehr häufig. Zuweilen wird etwa Marduks Zorn mit einer Sintflut (*abūbu*) verglichen⁽⁴²⁾. Der bereits erwähnte Marduk-Hymnus aus Ugarit, der je sechs zerstörerische und rettende Aktivitäten Marduks als Gegensatzpaare nebeneinander stellt, verwendet dabei mehrheitlich Verben, die nie im Kontext des Chaoskampfes gebraucht werden⁽⁴³⁾. Die Metaphern des Chaoskampfes sind offenbar ein *proprium* der Ijobdichtung. Sie verstärken deutlich das Spannungsverhältnis der beiden Brennpunkte.

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* *

Wer sich wie Ijob genötigt sieht, seine Situation im mythischen Vokabular des Chaoskampfes zu beschreiben, zahlt einen hohen Preis⁽⁴⁴⁾. Auch gutwillige Freunde werden wahrscheinlich nicht folgen, sondern zum Gegenangriff übergehen — und damit Gott gegen Ijobs Angriff verteidigen wollen. Bereits Abmilderungen oder gut gemeinte Kritik wirken unter solchen Umständen als Gegenangriffe, die den Leidenden zusätzlich verletzen. Wie muss es auf Ijob wirken, wenn Eliphas ihn mit Hilfe traditioneller Rechtgläubigkeit⁽⁴⁵⁾ unverwundbar machen will und dem Todkranken zusagt: “in voller Reife steigst du zu Grabe” (5,26)? Ohne es selbst zu merken, spricht Eliphas zynisch.

Natürlich weiss auch Eliphas von dunkeln Seiten Gottes, wenn er zu Ijob spricht: “Gott verwundet und verbindet, er schlägt, und seine Hand heilt” (5,18). Allerdings kann die Rhetorik des Eliphas nicht die

⁽⁴²⁾ Belege in CAD und AHW s.v. *abūbu*.

⁽⁴³⁾ Zeilen 34-39. Neuedition des akkadischen Texts bei M. DIETRICH, “Babylonian Literary Texts from Western Libraries”, *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose* (Hrsg. J.C. DE MOOR u.a.) (AOAT 42; Neukirchen 1993) 63-65. Ohne Verbindung zum Chaoskampf sind die hier gebrauchten Verben *qiālu*, *parāru*, *tabāku*, *nadū* sowie die positiven Aktivitäten *rēmu*, *rakāsu*, *šamātu*, *dabāqu*, *esēpu* und *šaqu*. Anders verhält es sich nur mit *maḥāsu* (Belege in CAD M 75-76) und *ḥepū* (CAD H 173 gibt nur *En.el.* IV 137 an). Ausserhalb der Aufreihung von Gegensatzpaaren ist eventuell noch auf *šebēru kakki* (CAD Š/2 245-246) in Z. 42 zu verweisen.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ FUCHS, *Mythos*, 93 zieht aus dem Gebrauch des elementaren Chaoskampf-Motivs den Schluss: “Hiob und Gott sind Gegner κατ’ ἐξοχήν geworden!”

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Verräterisch ist u.a. der Schluss der scheinbaren Trostesrede: “Wir haben es gehört; du aber merke es dir!” (5,27).

Tiefe von Ijobs Leiden erreichen, sondern bleibt in sicherer Distanz⁽⁴⁶⁾. Ijob hingegen brennt an beiden Brennpunkten, seiner verstörenden Klage und seinem kämpferischen Bekenntnis der Zuversicht. Gerade so hat er auch heute Hilfreiches zu sagen⁽⁴⁷⁾.

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SUMMARY

Job's excessive plaint against his aggressive and hostile God is intertwined with his surprising confession of confidence ("Bekenntnis der Zuversicht"). It seems to be a special relationship between these two poles which are forming quasi two focuses of an ellipse. This article studies in ch. 16 (and 19) each pole and especially their interrelation in contrast to mitigating tendencies in the ancient versions and the rabbinic exegesis. The mythic language of Job's lament is compared with similar accadian literature for demonstrating both analogies and important differences. The author of the Book of Job uses especially the language of the mythic struggle against chaos ("Chaoskampf") for his peculiar view of the dialectics in God.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ BALENTINE, *Job*, 264: "For Eliphaz, the pain of being wounded und struck is unfelt and virtually invisible". — Auch die heutige Exegeten-Zunft ist zur eigenen Hinterfragung herausgefordert. Gerade weil die meisten von uns — im Vergleich zum Durchschnitt der Menschheit — geordnetere und behütetere Lebensverhältnisse genießen, ist das Einfühlungsvermögen begrenzt.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Ein eindruckliches Beispiel sind die Erfahrungen südafrikanischer Universitätstheologen, welche das Buch Ijob mit Betroffenen lesen und von diesen Nichttheologen exegetisch reich belehrt werden; siehe z.B. G.O. WEST – B. ZENGELE, "Reading Job 'Positively' in the Context of HIV/AIDS in the Southern Africa", *Concilium* 4 (2004) 112-124.

Die großen Zahlen in Num 1 und 26: Forschungsüberblick und neuer Lösungsvorschlag (*)

Die großen Zahlen in den Zensusberichten von Num 1 und 26 werfen seit mehr als 100 Jahren Fragen auf. Archäologen haben darauf hingewiesen, dass eine Anzahl von 600.000 wehrfähigen Männern, die in einer Gesamtpopulation von mehr als zwei Millionen Menschen resultieren würde, schwerlich mit den Lebensbedingungen und den üblichen Populationen in Palästina vereinbar ist⁽¹⁾. Folglich hat man versucht, die biblischen Angaben umzuinterpretieren, um sie mit archäologisch wahrscheinlicheren Zahlen kompatibel zu machen. Dass diese Lösungsansätze bis in die neuere Zeit nicht vollauf befriedigend sind, zeigt die Diskussion, die vor elf Jahren von C.J. Humphreys ausgelöst wurde⁽²⁾. Im folgenden wird ein weiterer Vorschlag zur Interpretation der großen Zahlen gemacht, der auf einigen früheren Ansätzen aufbaut. Zum Verständnis ist ein kurzer Forschungsüberblick hilfreich.

I. Forschungsüberblick

Der Forschungsüberblick wird in einer Mischung aus zeitlicher und thematischer Darstellung präsentiert und beansprucht keineswegs

* Helmuth B. Pehlke zum 66. Geburtstag, 15. November 2009.

⁽¹⁾ W.M.F. PETRIE, *Researches in Sinai* (London 1906) 207-208; W.M.F. PETRIE, *Israel and Egypt* (London 1911) 41-42. Unwahrscheinlich ist bei dieser Gesamtpopulation auch die in Num 2 beschriebene Lagerordnung (um nur ein weiteres Problem zu nennen), siehe dazu E.W. DAVIES, "A Mathematical Conundrum: The Problem of the Large Numbers in Numbers I and XXVI", VT 45 (1995) 449-450.

⁽²⁾ C.J. HUMPHREYS, "The Number of People in the Exodus from Egypt: Decoding Mathematically the Very Large Numbers in Numbers I and XXVI", VT 48 (1998) 196-213. Zur Diskussion siehe J. MILGROM, "On Decoding Very Large Numbers", VT 49 (1999) 131-132; M.H. MCENTIRE, "A Response to Colin J. Humphreys's «The Number of People in the Exodus from Egypt: Decoding Mathematically the Very Large Numbers in Numbers I and XXVI»", VT 49 (1999) 262-264; R. HEINZERLING, "On the Interpretation of the Census Lists by C.J. Humphreys and G.E. Mendenhall", VT 50 (2000) 250-252; C.J. HUMPHREYS, "The Numbers in the Exodus from Egypt: A Further Appraisal", VT 50 (2000) 323-328; G.A. RENDSBURG, "An Additional Note to Two Recent Articles on the Number of People in the Exodus from Egypt and the Large Numbers in Numbers I and XXVI", VT 51 (2001) 392-396.

Vollständigkeit⁽³⁾. In den hier rezipierten Arbeiten werden die folgenden Größenordnungen für die Gesamtpopulation angegeben⁽⁴⁾:

Petrie	Mendenhall	Clark	Wenham	Humphreys	Zerbst
5.550	20.000	140.000	72.000	20.000	36.000 bis 42.000

Wie man sieht, schwanken die als realistisch empfundenen Werte zwischen 5.550 und 140.000. Der hier erarbeitete Lösungsvorschlag rechnet mit einer Gesamtpopulation von 120.000 Menschen.

1. Flinders Petrie (1906/1911) und Mendenhall (1958)

W.M. Flinders Petrie stellt fest, dass sich in beiden Zensuslisten die Ziffern 4 und 5 für die Hunderterangaben häufen, während 0,1,8 und 9 weder in Num 1 noch in Num 26 vorkommen. Die Ziffern 0 bis 9 sind also statistisch nicht gleichverteilt über den 24 Hunderterziffern der beiden Listen. Aus der mathematischen Unwahrscheinlichkeit dieses Ereignisses schließt er, dass die Hunderter unabhängig von den Tausendern sind, mit anderen Worten: dass Hunderter und Tausender jeweils eigene Bedeutungen haben anstatt in ihrer Kombination eine quantitative Angabe darzustellen. Im Anschluss geht er von der Polysemie des hebräischen Wortes אלף aus, das sowohl "tausend" als auch "Gruppe/Familie" bedeuten kann, und interpretiert in diesem

⁽³⁾ Ansätze, die auf Gematrie oder babylonischer Astronomie beruhen, werden hier nicht berücksichtigt, z.B. R. HEINZERLING, "Bileams Rätsel: Die Zählung der Wehrfähigen in Numeri 1 und 26", ZAW 111 (1999) 404-415. Ebenfalls unberücksichtigt bleiben Arbeiten, die hyperbolische Zahlenangaben als literarische Konvention im alten vorderen Orient ansehen wie D.M. FOUTS, "A Defense of the Hyperbolic Interpretation of Large Numbers in the Old Testament", JETS 40 (1997) 377-387 sowie DAVIES, "Conundrum".

⁽⁴⁾ PETRIE, *Researches*, 210-211; PETRIE, *Israel and Egypt*, 42-44; R.E.D. CLARK, "The Large Numbers of the Old Testament", *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* 87 (1955) 90; J.W. WENHAM, "Large Numbers in the Old Testament", *TynB* 18 (1967) 31; HUMPHREYS, "Decoding Mathematically", 211; U. ZERBST, "Die Größe der israelitischen Bevölkerung", *Keine Posaunen vor Jericho? Beiträge zur Archäologie der Landnahme* (eds. U. ZERBST — P. VAN DER VEEN) (Neuhausen 2005) 122. G.E. MENDENHALL, "The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26", *JBL* 77 (1958) 52-66 macht keine Angabe zur Gesamtpopulation, setzt aber 5.550 wehrfähige Männer ab 20 Jahren voraus (61). Die Summe von 20.000 erhält man, wenn man mit WENHAM, "Large Numbers", 31 und HUMPHREYS, "Decoding Mathematically", 202 annimmt, dass die Gesamtpopulation aus genauso vielen Frauen wie Männern besteht und dass die Anzahl der Männer ab 20 Jahren genauso groß ist wie die Anzahl der männlichen Personen unter 20 Jahren.

Sinne die Tausender als "Zelte" und die Hunderter als Bewohner dieser Zelte. Die traditionelle Lesart 46.500 für den Stamm Ruben beispielsweise (Num 1,21) erhält somit die Bedeutung "46 Zelte mit insgesamt 500 Bewohnern". Die Summen betragen für den ersten Zensus 598 Zelte mit insgesamt 5.550 Bewohnern und für den zweiten Zensus 596 Zelte mit 5.730 Bewohnern⁽⁵⁾.

Der Ansatz von G.E. Mendenhall versteht sich als Ergänzung zu Petries Ausführungen auf der Basis von soziologischen Erkenntnissen über den alten vorderen Orient. Mendenhall geht mit Ri 6,15 (Gideons אֶלֶף als kleinste in Manasse) davon aus, dass אֶלֶף zur Bezeichnung einer Untereinheit innerhalb eines Stammes verwendet wurde. Es handele sich also zunächst um einen soziologischen Begriff, der später im militärischen Kontext Verwendung fand⁽⁶⁾. Während in der Bronzezeit Zensuslisten benutzt wurden, um im Kriegsfall Truppen auf der Basis des Stammes auszuheben, habe es im vereinigten Königreich Davids ein stehendes Heer gegeben, dessen Anführer (שָׂרֵי אֶלֶף) jeweils eine Einheit von ca. 1.000 Mann befehligten. Der priesterliche Bearbeiter habe fälschlicherweise vorausgesetzt, dass die (kleinere) Einheit אֶלֶף des Stämmebundes identisch mit der Kampftruppe aus der Zeit der Monarchie war⁽⁷⁾. Die Tausender in den Zensuslisten von Num 1 und 26 seien Aufzählungen der Einheiten, in die die Stämme aufgeteilt waren, während die Hunderter die Summen der im Kriegsfall ausgehobenen Männer bezeichneten⁽⁸⁾. Die Summe der wehrfähigen Männer in Num 1 beträgt demnach 5.550. Geht man davon aus, dass die Gesamtpopulation aus genauso vielen Frauen wie Männern besteht und dass die Anzahl der Männer ab 20 Jahren genauso groß ist wie die Anzahl der männlichen Personen unter 20 Jahren⁽⁹⁾, so erhält man als Größe der Gesamtpopulation ca. 20.000.

2. Clark (1955) und Wenham (1967)

R.E.D. Clark versucht das Problem zu lösen, indem er אֶלֶף in der Bedeutung "Offizier" (אֶלֶףִּים) voraussetzt, was er anhand von 1 Chr 12,24-38 zu belegen versucht⁽¹⁰⁾. Weiter setzt er voraus, dass die

⁽⁵⁾ PETRIE, *Researches*, 210-211; PETRIE, *Israel and Egypt*, 42-44.

⁽⁶⁾ MENDENHALL, "Census Lists", 60-61.

⁽⁷⁾ MENDENHALL, "Census Lists", 53-54, 57-58.

⁽⁸⁾ MENDENHALL, "Census Lists", 61.

⁽⁹⁾ So z.B. WENHAM, "Large Numbers", 31 und HUMPHREYS, "Decoding Mathematically", 202.

⁽¹⁰⁾ CLARK, "Large Numbers", 84.

Tausenderangaben in Num 1 und 26 aus den ursprünglichen Bedeutungen von אלף und אָלף zusammengesetzt sind. Für eine Zahlenangabe von beispielsweise 46.500 (Num 1,21) nennt er als mögliche ursprüngliche Bedeutungen “46 Offiziere und 500 Soldaten”, “45 Offiziere und 1.500 Soldaten”, “44 Offiziere und 2.500 Soldaten” usw. Weiter geht er mit Ex 18,21.25 von Offizieren aus, die jeweils 1.000, 100 oder 50 Soldaten anführten. Rechnet man zum Beispiel für 1.000 Soldaten mit einem Anführer für 1.000 sowie zehn zusätzlichen Anführern für 100, so erhält man als Verhältnis zwischen Soldaten und Offizieren $1.000/(1+10) = 91$. Ersetzt man die 10 Anführer über 100 Soldaten durch 20 Anführer über 50, so erhält man als Verhältnis $1.000/(1+20) = 48$. Diese Verhältnisse vergleicht Clark mit denen, die man für alle möglichen Kombinationen von “46 Offiziere und 500 Soldaten”, “45 Offiziere und 1.500 Soldaten” usw. bei allen 24 Zahlenangaben von Num 1 und 26 erhält. Damit berechnet er Schätzwerte für den tatsächlichen Anteil an Offizieren in einer Zahlenangabe und kommt somit zu einer Interpretation, die zu geringeren Gesamtzahlen führt. Als mögliche Größe der Gesamtpopulation gibt Clark 140.000 an⁽¹¹⁾.

J.W. Wenham geht in Anlehnung an Clark davon aus, dass die Tausender für Elitekämpfer oder Offiziere stehen. Den Ausdruck מֵאָה versteht er als “Truppenkontingent” von ca. 75 Mann⁽¹²⁾. In Num 26 emendiert Wenham die Angaben bei vier Stämmen, um die Differenz zu den Zahlen in Num 1 zu verringern. Sämtliche Zahlen spaltet er nach dem Muster von Clark in Offiziere und eine Menge von Hunderter-Kontingenten auf (z.B. 59.300 als 57 Offiziere und 23 Einheiten), was er jedoch selbst nur als “intelligent guesses” bezeichnet. Für eine “Tausendschaft” schlägt Wenham sieben bis acht “Hunderter”-Einheiten zu jeweils 75 Soldaten vor⁽¹³⁾. Damit kommt er zu einer geschätzten Gesamtpopulation von 72.000⁽¹⁴⁾.

3. Humphreys (1998) und Zerbst (2005)

C.J. Humphreys geht ebenfalls von der Bedeutung “militärische Einheit” für אלף aus. Das Besondere an seinem Modell ist, dass er die 273 Erstgeborenen aus Num 3,46, die nicht durch die Leviten ausgelöst

⁽¹¹⁾ CLARK, “Large Numbers”, 87-88, 90.

⁽¹²⁾ WENHAM, “Large Numbers”, 30-31.

⁽¹³⁾ WENHAM, “Large Numbers”, 36-38.

⁽¹⁴⁾ WENHAM, “Large Numbers”, 31.

wurden, als Grundlage für einige Berechnungen nimmt, um damit den Ansatz von Mendenhall mathematisch plausibel zu machen⁽¹⁵⁾. Das (unbekannte) Verhältnis der männlichen Israeliten zur Anzahl der erstgeborenen männlichen Israeliten bezeichnet Humphreys mit der Variablen n . Mit Hilfe einiger zuvor aufgestellter Gleichungen berechnet er dann für jeweils feste Werte von n die mögliche Anzahl der Israeliten über 20 Jahren. Das Plausibilitätsargument verläuft nun wie folgt: Für die Werte $n=8$ und $n=9$ erhält man als Anzahl der Israeliten über 20 Jahren 4.004 bzw. 6.757. Setzt man als Rechenprobe den (dazwischen liegenden) Wert 5.550, der nach den Theorien von Petrie und Mendenhall die ursprüngliche Summe der wehrfähigen Israeliten darstellt, in die Formel ein, so erhält man für n den (zwischen 8 und 9 liegenden) Wert 8,7⁽¹⁶⁾. Als Schätzung der Gesamtpopulation nennt Humphreys 20.000⁽¹⁷⁾.

U. Zerbst erweitert das Modell von Mendenhall um Elemente von Clark und Wenham. Zunächst geht er von der Interpretation von אלף als militärische Einheit aus. Anschließend wendet er das System der "Mehrfachaddition" an, d.h. der möglichen Interpretation von beispielsweise 46.500 (Num 1,21) als "45 Einheiten: 1.500 Soldaten", "44 Einheiten: 2.500 Soldaten" usw. Durch dieses Verfahren ergeben sich "fast unbegrenzt neue Kombinationen"⁽¹⁸⁾. Anhand solcher Berechnungen sowie durch Vergleiche mit möglichen Wachstumsraten erhält Zerbst eine Gesamtpopulation von 36.000 bis 42.000 Menschen⁽¹⁹⁾.

II. Ein neuer Lösungsansatz

Ich fasse meinen Lösungsvorschlag zunächst kurz zusammen:

- אלף ist nicht als "tausend", sondern als Bezeichnung einer militärischen Einheit zu verstehen. Eine solche Einheit bestand nicht aus 1.000 Soldaten, vielmehr haben wir uns die Einheiten des israelitischen Heeres zur Zeit der Landnahme beträchtlich kleiner vorzustellen.
- Die מאות-Werte sind nicht in den אלף-Werten enthalten. Ausdrücke der Form "x אלף y מאות" sind nicht als "x Einheiten, bestehend aus y Personen" zu verstehen, sondern als "x Einheiten und y מאות".

⁽¹⁵⁾ HUMPHREYS, "Decoding Mathematically", 200-201, 206.

⁽¹⁶⁾ HUMPHREYS, "Decoding Mathematically", 212, 203.

⁽¹⁷⁾ HUMPHREYS, "Decoding Mathematically", 211.

⁽¹⁸⁾ ZERBST, "Größe", 118-120.

⁽¹⁹⁾ ZERBST, "Größe", 122.

- מֵאָה ist nicht als “hundert”, sondern als Bezeichnung einer kleineren militärischen Einheit zu interpretieren. Auch diese bestand nicht aus 100 Soldaten. Es kann angenommen werden, dass zehn מֵאָה-Einheiten in der Regel eine אֶלֶף-Einheit bildeten.
- Die Größe der israelitischen Gesamtpopulation zur Zeit der Landnahme kann schätzungsweise mit 120.000 angegeben werden.

1. אֶלֶף als militärische Einheit

Ich gehe davon aus, dass אֶלֶף in den Zensusberichten nicht mit der Bedeutung “tausend” verwendet wird, sondern als “militärische Einheit”. Das wird durch die Beobachtung gestützt, dass אֶלֶף zur Bezeichnung einer soziologischen Einheit, insbesondere für Unterabteilungen eines Stammes, benutzt wird. So wird in 1 Sam 10,19-21 אֶלֶף referenzidentisch zu מִשְׁפָּחָה verwendet: Zur Bestimmung des Königs soll Israel sich nach seinen Stämmen und אֶלְפֵיהֶם aufstellen, das Los trifft dann zunächst einen Stamm und innerhalb dessen eine מִשְׁפָּחָה⁽²⁰⁾.

Generell lässt sich jedoch sagen, dass Referenzidentität nicht immer vorliegen muss (und dass lexikalische Synonymie auf keinen Fall vorliegt). Vielmehr wird ein Stamm je nach Situation mal in אֶלְפֵיהֶם, mal in מִשְׁפָּחָה eingeteilt⁽²¹⁾. Besonders in Num 1 und 26 gilt, dass אֶלֶף und מִשְׁפָּחָה nicht einfach austauschbar sind, obwohl sie inhaltlich miteinander in Beziehung stehen. In Num 1,2.18 wird der Zensus entsprechend der “Sippen” (מִשְׁפָּחָה) und “Vaterhäuser” (בֵּית-אָב) beschrieben⁽²²⁾. In der darauf folgenden Liste (1,20-42) wird für jeden Stamm das Ergebnis der Zählung nach “Sippen” und “Vaterhäusern” präsentiert, für die konkreten Zahlenwerte der “Gemusterten” wird jedoch אֶלֶף verwendet (z.B. 1,20-21). Im zweiten Zensus werden zunächst für jeden Stamm die “Sippen” namentlich aufgezählt, die Aufzählung schließt dann mit der Formel: “Dies sind die מִשְׁפָּחָה der ...”, gefolgt von der Stammesbezeichnung (z.B. 26,5-7a). Das Ergebnis der “Gemusterten” wird dann mit אֶלֶף angegeben (26,7b), wobei kein

⁽²⁰⁾ R. DE VAUX, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (frz. 1958; Grand Rapids 1997) 216; vgl. auch N.K. GOTTWALD, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel 1250-1050 BCE* (Sheffield 1999) 259 sowie DAVIES, “Conundrum”, 461.

⁽²¹⁾ GOTTWALD, *Tribes*, 257.

⁽²²⁾ Zu letzterem als soziologische Untergliederung von מִשְׁפָּחָה siehe GOTTWALD, *Tribes*, 285-287.

Zusammenhang zwischen der konkreten Anzahl der namentlich genannten משפחה und der Anzahl der אלה vorliegt⁽²³⁾.

Welcher Zusammenhang genau zwischen der soziologischen Einheit משפחה und der militärischen Einheit אלה besteht, bleibt unklar. Folgendes ist jedoch deutlich: Während משפחה die Unterabteilung eines Stammes als soziologische Einheit mit speziellen gesellschaftlichen Funktionen bezeichnet, hat אלה eher eine militärische Konnotation und bezeichnet ein militärisches Aufgebot⁽²⁴⁾. Für die Verwendung von אלה im militärischen Kontext sprechen Texte wie Jos 4,13; 7,3-5; 8,3.12; Ri 1,4; 12,6 und 1 Sam 4,2.10, um nur einige wenige zu nennen. Ein militärischer Kontext ist auch in den Zensusberichten gegeben. In Num 1 werden die Größenordnungen der Stämme jeweils mit der Formel וְזֶה צֶבֶא eingeleitet (z.B. 1,20). Im zweiten Zensusbericht steht dieselbe Formel in der Gottesrede, die die Anweisung zur Zählung enthält (Num 26,2).

Weiter gehe ich davon aus, dass die Größe einer אלה-Einheit nicht 1.000 Mann betrug, sondern weitaus geringer sein konnte und nicht einmal konstant zu sein brauchte. Denn wenn die Musterungen auf der Grundlage von Familienverbänden stattfanden, was durch die Verwendung von משפחה in den Zensusberichten nahegelegt wird, dann ist eine variable Größenordnung für die militärischen Einheiten wahrscheinlich⁽²⁵⁾.

2. Die מאות – Werte sind nicht in den אלה – Werten enthalten

Die auf Petrie zurückgehende Interpretation der Zensuslisten setzt voraus, dass in den Angaben für jeden Stamm die אלה-Werte die מאות-Werte bereits enthalten. Stattdessen gehe ich davon aus, dass Ausdrücke der Form “מאות y אלה x” nicht als “x Einheiten, bestehend aus y Personen” zu interpretieren sind, sondern als “x Einheiten und y מאות”⁽²⁶⁾.

⁽²³⁾ GOTTWALD, *Tribes*, 268 sieht eine 1:1-Entsprechung zwischen אלה und משפחה und vermutet, die fehlenden Namen der Sippenoberhäupter in Num 26 seien verlorengegangen; dies ist allerdings hypothetisch.

⁽²⁴⁾ GOTTWALD, *Tribes*, 271. GOTTWALD, *Tribes*, 270 spricht sogar von אלה als “משפחה in arms”.

⁽²⁵⁾ D. MERLING, “Large Numbers at the Time of the Exodus”, *NEASB* 44 (1999) 23.

⁽²⁶⁾ Das Vorkommen eines ו zwischen den אלה- und den מאות-Angaben in den Zensuslisten ist noch kein Argument für die Bedeutung “und”, da es auch explikatorisch, also im Sinne eines Doppelpunktes interpretiert werden könnte; vgl. zum Waw *adaequationis* P. JOÜON – T. MURAOKA, *A Grammar of Biblical He-*

Der textliche Befund zeigt, dass die Angaben genau so verstanden wurden. Denn bei der Addition der מאות-Werte wurden jeweils 10 מאות zu einer zusätzlichen mathematischen Einheit der Wertigkeit אלף zusammengefasst: Die Summe der אלף-Werte in Num 1 beträgt 598, da aber 55 מאות als 5 אלף und 5 מאות aufgefasst wurden, ergeben sich 603 אלף. Diese herkömmliche mathematische Summenbildung, die wir in Num 1 und 26 vorfinden, wurde seit Petrie als Fehler eines Tradenten aufgefasst, wird jedoch in dem hier dargestellten Modell als ursprünglich vorausgesetzt.

Ein Argument für diese Interpretation ergibt sich aus den Berichten über die Levitenzählungen in Num 3 und 4, die nach demselben Schema aufgebaut sind wie Num 1 und 26: Wenn man die dort auftretenden Zahlen als "Einheiten, bestehend aus Personen" interpretiert, so ergibt sich ein Problem, wie die folgende Tabelle zeigt.

	Gerschon		Kehat		Merari	
	Num 3	Num 4	Num 3	Num 4	Num 3	Num 4
Zahl	7.500	2.630	8.600	2.750	6.200	3.200
Einheiten	7	2	8	2	6	3
Personen	500	630	600	750	200	200

Die Gesamtzahlen der levitischen Abteilungen Gerschon, Kehat und Merari für männliche Personen ab einem Monat werden mit 7.500, 8.600 und 6.200 angegeben (Num 3,22.28.34), was bei der üblichen Interpretation von אלף als "Einheit" zu den reinen Zahlenwerten 500, 600 und 200 führt. Die Angaben für die diensttuenden (männlichen) Leviten zwischen 30 und 50 Jahren lauten für dieselben Familien 2.630, 2.750 und 3.200 (Num 4,40.36.44), d.h. die "eigentlichen" Zahlen sind 630, 750 und 200. Damit ist bei zwei der drei Abteilungen die Anzahl der Männer zwischen 30 und 50 Jahren größer als die der männlichen Personen über einem Monat, bei der dritten Abteilung sind die Zahlen gleich groß. Beides ist natürlich nicht möglich⁽²⁷⁾. Diese Inkonsistenz spricht gegen die Annahme, dass die אלף-Werte die מאות-Werte enthalten.

brew (SB 14; Rome 1991) §174h. Tatsächlich kann das ו in Einzelfällen fehlen wie bei der Zählung der dienstfähigen Kehatiten (Num 4,36), doch in den entsprechenden Angaben für die anderen Leviten und für die Summe (4,40.44.48) ist es wieder vorhanden.

⁽²⁷⁾ Vgl. HEINZERLING, "Interpretation", 250-251 und ZERBST, "Größe", 113.

3. מאה als militärische Einheit

Wenn die israelitische Armee nach soziologischem Muster eingeteilt war⁽²⁸⁾, dann können wir damit rechnen, dass es nicht nur militärische Einheiten erster, sondern auch solche zweiter Ordnung gab, dass also אלף-Einheiten nochmals in Untereinheiten aufgeteilt waren. Es liegt nahe, dass diese Untereinheiten mit מאה bezeichnet wurden und dass in den Zensusberichten Num 1 und 26 nicht Einzelpersonen, sondern militärische Einheiten verschiedener Ordnung gezählt werden. Unabhängig von ihrer tatsächlichen Größe gehe ich davon aus, dass zehn מאה-Einheiten jeweils eine אלף-Einheit bilden. Ich interpretiere also die Angabe "מאות 5 אלף 46" (Num 1,21) als "46 Einheiten erster Ordnung und 5 Einheiten zweiter Ordnung".

In Num 1 beträgt die Summe der אלף-Einheiten 598 und die Summe der מאה-Einheiten 55. Diese kann, wenn eine Einheit erster Ordnung aus zehn Einheiten zweiter Ordnung bestand, rechnerisch in fünf אלף-Einheiten und einen Rest von fünf מאה-Einheiten aufgeteilt werden, so dass die Summe der אלף-Einheiten 603 beträgt. Genausowenig wie bei den אלף-Einheiten an 1.000 Personen gedacht ist, müssen die מאה-Einheiten aus 100 Personen bestanden haben. Die tatsächliche Größe der Einheiten kann von Stamm zu Stamm und sogar von Einheit zu Einheit variieren, solange die Bedingung erfüllt ist, dass eine Einheit erster Ordnung aus zehn Einheiten zweiter Ordnung besteht.

Der Rest der Darstellung begründet mit vier Argumenten die Existenz einer militärischen Einheit mit der Bezeichnung מאה.

a) "Hundertschaften" und ihre Anführer

Die Existenz von מאה-Einheiten wird durch folgende Texte plausibel: In 1 Sam 29,2 wird beschrieben, wie die Fürsten der Philister ihr Heer aufmarschieren lassen. Dieser Truppenaufmarsch erfolgt למאות ולא לפי. Ein ähnlicher Text ist 2 Sam 18,4, wo David sein Heer vor der Schlacht gegen Absalom aufmarschieren lässt. Auch dies geschieht למאות ולא לפי. In beiden Texten geht es um das gesamte bei einer bestimmten Schlacht zur Verfügung stehende Heer, das in Kampfeinheiten von offensichtlich verschiedener Größe eingeteilt ist.

Dass der שר אלף Befehlshaber über eine militärische Einheit war, ist seit langem anerkannt⁽²⁹⁾. Doch auch der Ausdruck שר מאה ist gut

⁽²⁸⁾ DE VAUX, *Ancient Israel*, 216.

⁽²⁹⁾ MENDENHALL, "Census Lists", 57.

bezeugt. Wir finden ihn viermal im chronistischen Bericht über die Einsetzung des Königs Joas durch den Priester Jojada (2 Chr 23,1.9.14.20) sowie fünfmal in der Parallelstelle im Königebuch (2 Kön 11,4.9.10.15.19). Saul bezweifelt seinen Anhängern gegenüber, dass David sie zu שרי אלפים ושרי מאות machen wird (1 Sam 22,7). Und vor der Schlacht gegen Absalom mustert David sein Heer (פקד wie in Num 1 und 26) und setzt שרי אלפים ושרי מאות ein (2 Sam 18,1)⁽³⁰⁾.

Die Annahme, מאות als militärische Einheit aufzufassen, wird jedoch vor allem durch Num 31 gestützt, dem Bericht über den Feldzug gegen die Midianiter. Denn sowohl der Kontext als auch der Wortschatz dieses Kapitels lassen Bezüge zu Num 1 und 26 erkennen. In V.4 wird zunächst die Anweisung gegeben, von jedem Stamm (מטה, vgl. 1,21) eine אלף-Einheit zum Heer (צבא, vgl. 1,20; 26,2) auszuheben. VV. 5-6 beschreibt dann die Durchführung: Von allen אלף-Einheiten Israels wird eine Einheit pro Stamm in den Krieg geschickt. Im weiteren Verlauf des Textes werden wiederholt die Anführer der אלף- und der מאות-Einheiten genannt, und zwar als zwei getrennte Gruppen (שרי האלפים und שרי המאות, VV. 14.48.52), und als Kollektiv (שרי האלפים והמאות, V. 54). In V. 14 ist darüber hinaus interessant, dass die militärischen Anführer auch פקודי החיל genannt werden. Das substantivierte passive Partizip von פקד bezeichnet hier einen Vorgesetzten⁽³¹⁾. Die Vorgesetzten des Heeres sind also genau die Anführer der אלף- und der מאות-Einheiten. Diese Referenzidentität wird auch in 2 Kön 11,15 hergestellt⁽³²⁾, dort jedoch nur in Bezug auf die שרי המאות. Die genannten Texte zeigen, dass nicht nur die אלף-, sondern auch die מאות-Einheiten eine feste Institution im Heer waren.

b) "Hundert" in den El-Amarna-Tafeln

In den El-Amarna-Briefen finden sich zwei Vorkommen des Zahlworts "hundert", die sich auch als Bezeichnung einer Gruppe von Menschen interpretieren lassen. In einer für den Pharao bestimmten Liste in EA 120.22 heißt es⁽³³⁾:

⁽³⁰⁾ Weitere Belege sind 1 Chr 27,1 (militärischer Kontext in V. 3) und 2 Chr 25,5. Texte, in denen שר אלף und שר מאות in einem nicht notwendigerweise militärischen Kontext verwendet werden, sind 1 Chr 13,1; 26,26; 28,1; 29,6 und 2 Chr 1,2.

⁽³¹⁾ W. GESENIUS – F. BUHL, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (Berlin 1915/1962) 654.

⁽³²⁾ Gegen den Vorschlag der Streichung im Apparat der BHS.

⁽³³⁾ J.A. KNUDTZON, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln* (Aalen 1915/1964) 520-521.

90 *me amāti ardūti*

90 hundert Mägde (und) Knechte

In der deutschen Übersetzung von Knudtzon wird die Sequenz zweier Zahlen nicht interpretiert. W.L. Moran dagegen übersetzt mit “90-100” und begründet dies in einer Fußnote damit, dass die Alternative “90 mal 100” zu der überhöhten Angabe von 9.000 führen würde⁽³⁴⁾. Doch ist es nicht denkbar, dass *me* in diesem Kontext die Bedeutung von “Gruppe” oder “Einheit” hat? In diesem Fall wären 90 “Mengeneinheiten” von Sklaven gemeint, deren genaue Größe uns unbekannt ist. Diese Annahme ist nicht unwahrscheinlicher als die einer vagen Angabe von “90-100 Sklaven” in einer für den Pharao bestimmten Liste. Leider ist der Inhalt der Tafel in der Umgebung von Zeile 22 schlecht erhalten, so dass der Kontext keine Rückschlüsse auf die korrekte Interpretation zulässt.

Ein weiteres Beispiel befindet sich in EA 132.56-57, wo Rib-Addi von Gubla den Pharao um die Sendung von Truppen bittet, um eine militärische Bedrohung von seinem Land abzuwenden⁽³⁵⁾:

[uš-ši-]ra 50 *me amēlūti* u 50 m[e] a[mēlšit]i š[a] [mā^{tu}me-lu]-ḥa 50 ^{isu}narkabati
[Send]e 50 hundert Leute und 50 hund[ert] L[eut]e vo[n] [Melu]ḥa, 50 Wagen!

Auch hier übersetzt Moran mit “50-100”⁽³⁶⁾. Verwunderlich ist dann jedoch, warum der Bittsteller bei den Soldaten eine derart unscharfe Angabe macht und bei den Streitwagen um die runde Anzahl von 50 Stück bittet. Plausibler ist in diesem Kontext, dass es in dem Brief um jeweils 50 Einheiten von Soldaten sowie um 50 Wagen geht⁽³⁷⁾.

Auch wenn die genannten Beispiele keineswegs eindeutig sind, so ist die Verwendung von *me* als “Gruppe” oder “militärische Einheit” in den El-Amarna-Briefen doch zumindest denkmöglich.

⁽³⁴⁾ W.L. MORAN, *Les lettres d'El-Amarna*. Correspondance diplomatique du pharaon (Paris 1987) 330-331.

⁽³⁵⁾ KNUDTZON, *El-Amarna*, 562-563.

⁽³⁶⁾ MORAN, *El-Amarna*, 352.

⁽³⁷⁾ Weitere Vorkommen von *me*, die eindeutig im militärischen Kontext stehen und in den Textausgaben als “hundert” übersetzt werden, die aber auch eine militärische Einheit bedeuten könnten, sind in EA 93.13 (“3 hundert”), EA 95.39 (“2 hundert”), EA 131.12-13 (“3 hundert” und “hundert”) und EA 244.35 (“1 hundert”) zu finden.

c) Weitere soziologische und militärische Einheiten in biblischen Texten

Es wurde bereits dargestellt, dass ein Stamm in Israel je nach Situation entweder in **אלפים** oder in **משפחה** eingeteilt werden konnte. Diese Begriffe sind nicht austauschbar, die damit verbundenen Unterteilungen operieren aber beide auf derselben Ebene, nämlich der des Stammes. Nun wurde eine **משפחה** weiter unterteilt, und der Name der nächstkleineren Einheit lautet **בית־אב**⁽³⁸⁾. Wenn nun Stämme in "Sippen" und diese wiederum in "Vaterhäuser" eingeteilt waren, dann ist es nur natürlich, eine ähnliche Einteilung auch im militärischen Kontext anzunehmen: Im Kriegsfall wurden die wehrfähigen Männer nach Stämmen geordnet rekrutiert⁽³⁹⁾. Nach dem Vorbild der alltäglichen soziologischen Aufteilung eines Stammes in **משפחה** wurde ein Stammeskontingent in kleinere Einheiten, die **אלפים**, gegliedert. Und wie die **משפחה** nochmals in **בית־אבות** aufgeteilt waren, so ist auch eine Einteilung der **אלפים** in **מאות** wahrscheinlich:

soziologische Einheit	militärische Einheit
משפחה / שבט	משפחה / שבט
משפחה	אלף
בית־אב	מאה

Wie können wir uns nun die Durchführung eines militärischen Zensus vorstellen? Darüber kann Jos 7,14-18 Aufschluss geben, wo die Suche nach demjenigen beschrieben wird, der sich an der Beute aus Jericho vergriffen hatte⁽⁴⁰⁾. Zunächst wird, offensichtlich durch das Los, der Stamm des Schuldigen bestimmt, dann innerhalb des Stammes die "Sippe", innerhalb dieser das "Vaterhaus" und innerhalb dessen der Einzelne. Das Verfahren wird also bei der größten soziologischen Einheit begonnen und das Ergebnis wird systematisch eingeschränkt ("top down"). Für den Ablauf einer militärischen Zählung bietet sich das umgekehrte Verfahren an ("bottom up"): Zuerst werden die kleineren Einheiten (**מאות**) aufgestellt und gezählt. Dabei wird jeweils eine bestimmte Anzahl von ihnen (z.B. zehn) zu einer größeren Einheit (**אלף**) zusammengefasst. Anschließend können die größeren Einheiten gezählt werden. Natürlicherweise bleiben einige kleinere Einheiten übrig, die dann in der Summe für den betreffenden

⁽³⁸⁾ GOTTWALD, *Tribes*, 285, so auch schon M. NOTH, *Geschichte Israels* (Göttingen 1969) 102.

⁽³⁹⁾ MENDENHALL, "Census Lists", 53-54.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Vgl. GOTTWALD, *Tribes*, 258-259.

Stamm extra angegeben werden: “אלף x und y מאות”. Möglicherweise finden wir in dieser Art des Zensusverfahrens eine Erklärung für Petries Beobachtung, dass bei den Hunderterangaben die Ziffern 0,1,8 und 9 fehlen⁽⁴¹⁾. Denn falls bei der Zählung eines Stammes nur eine מאה-Einheit übrig bleibt, dann ist es gut möglich, ihre Männer auf andere Einheiten zu verteilen oder die ganze Einheit in eine beliebige אלף-Einheit zu integrieren, die dann nicht zehn, sondern ausnahmsweise elf Untereinheiten enthält. Entsprechend könnte ein Rest von acht oder neun מאה-Einheiten als eigenständige אלף-Einheit gezählt werden⁽⁴²⁾. Ein Rest von zwei bis sieben מאה-Einheiten wurde dann als zu klein für eine eigenständige אלף-Einheit und zu groß zum Aufteilen angesehen.

In Ex 18,21.25 und Dtn 1,15 werden nicht nur שרי אלפים und שרי מאות genannt, sondern auch שרי חמשים und שרי עשרות. Hier handelt es sich nicht um einen militärischen Kontext, sondern um einen juristischen. Dennoch ist es im Licht dieser Texte durchaus möglich, eine weitere militärische Einheit zu postulieren, nämlich die der “Fünzigenschaft”, die möglicherweise eine halbe מאה-Einheit darstellt. Dadurch ließe sich der Wert “45.650” für den Stamm Gad in Num 1,25 gut erklären. Gestützt wird diese Vermutung durch 1 Sam 8,12, wo Samuel vom zukünftigen König behauptet, er werde die jungen Männer zu שרי אלפים und zu שרי חמשים machen, und diese Stelle hat eindeutig einen militärischen Kontext (8,11)⁽⁴³⁾. Dasselbe gilt für den Text 2 Kön 1,9-14, in dem nicht nur der שר חמשים genannt wird, der den Propheten Elia zum König bringen soll, sondern auch die Einheit der חמשים⁽⁴⁴⁾.

⁽⁴¹⁾ PETRIE, *Researches*, 207.

⁽⁴²⁾ Der Gültigkeit des oben beschriebenen Übertragsverfahrens (also der Aufteilung von insgesamt 55 מאה-Einheiten in fünf אלף- und einen Rest von fünf מאה-Einheiten) tut dies keinen Abbruch, da sich dieses lediglich auf die Summe der Einheiten aller Stämme bezieht. Das heißt: In der Summe wird für jeweils zehn restliche מאה-Einheiten eine zusätzliche אלף-Einheit berechnet. Dies ist unabhängig davon, ob die schon vorher gezählten אלף-Einheiten der einzelnen Stämme aus acht, neun, zehn oder elf מאה-Einheiten bestehen.

⁽⁴³⁾ Die Versionen glätten diese vergleichsweise seltene Erwähnung der “Obersten über Fünzig”, indem sie “Hundert” aus den “Fünzig” machen (LXX) oder indem sie nach Dtn 1,15 die ganze Reihe der “Obersten über Tausend, Hundert, Fünzig und Zehn” anführen (Peschitta), doch hat der MT sicher die *lectio difficilior* und ist deshalb zu bevorzugen.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Der שר חמשים in Jes 3,3 steht in einem Kontext, der entweder militärisch oder juristisch sein kann (3,2), auch wenn J.D.W. WATTS, *Isaiah 1-33* (WBC 24; Dallas, TX 1985) 33 und schon F. DELITZSCH, *Commentar über das Buch Jesaja*

All diese Texte legen eine Hierarchie soziologischer und militärischer Einheiten nahe, so dass es ganz natürlich ist, auch die Hunderterwerte in den Zensusberichten als Zahlenangaben für eine bestimmte militärische Einheit anzusehen.

d) Die ägyptische Heeresstruktur

Zur Zeit des Neuen Reiches bestand die ägyptische Armee aus Divisionen von jeweils circa 5.000 Mann. Dabei war eine Division in 20 Einheiten zu 250 Mann eingeteilt. Diese bestanden weiter aus Einheiten zu 50 und zu 10 Mann, allerdings gibt es keinen Beleg für Einheiten zu 100 Mann⁽⁴⁵⁾. Dennoch ist es angesichts dieser Daten naheliegend, dass auch die israelitische Armee in einer mindestens zweistufigen Hierarchie organisiert war, dass also die אלף -Einheiten nochmals unterteilt waren. Während in der ägyptischen Armee jeweils fünf kleinere Einheiten zu einer größeren zusammengefasst wurden, gehe ich davon aus, dass der entsprechende Faktor in der israelitischen Armee 10 war und dass die Einheiten zweiter Ordnung mit מאה bezeichnet wurden.

Zugegebenermaßen ist die hierarchische Struktur der ägyptischen Armee zur Zeit des Neuen Reiches allein noch kein Argument für eine vergleichbare Organisation der israelitischen Armee. Doch gibt es einige Fakten aus dem ägyptischen Militärwesen, die eine gewisse Ähnlichkeit zu Aussagen im Buch Numeri aufweisen: Erstens begann der Militärdienst in Ägypten im Alter von 20 Jahren (vgl. Num 1,3)⁽⁴⁶⁾. Zweitens gab es in der ägyptischen Armee Standarten, die der Orientierung im Kampf und der Identifikation des Soldaten mit der eigenen Einheit dienten; bei der Schlacht von Kadesch beispielsweise waren die vier Divisionen der Armee Ramses II. jeweils mit einem "Feldzeichen" ausgestattet (vgl. Num 1,52; 2; 10,14-28)⁽⁴⁷⁾. Drittens

(BCAT III.1; Leipzig 1889) 82 nur von einem militärischen Begriff ausgehen und dazu auf den entsprechenden assyrischen Offizierstitel verweisen.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ R.B. PARTRIDGE, *Fighting Pharaohs. Weapons and Warfare in Ancient Egypt* (London 2002) 88; R.O. FAULKNER, "Egyptian Military Organization", *JEA* 39 (1953) 42, 45.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ PARTRIDGE, *Fighting Pharaohs*, 82.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ PARTRIDGE, *Fighting Pharaohs*, 87,91; R.O. FAULKNER, "Egyptian Military Standards", *JEA* 27 (1941) 12,17. Ob לָבַד in Num 1,52 u.ö. tatsächlich mit "Feldzeichen, Standarte" zu übersetzen ist, ist umstritten. Aufgrund der abweichenden Übersetzung der Versionen bezweifeln dies DE VAUX, *Ancient Israel*, 226-227 und B.A. LEVINE, *Numbers 1-20. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 4A; New York 1993) 146-148. Dagegen spricht sich P.J.

waren im ägyptischen Heer Signaltrompeten in Gebrauch (vgl. Num 10,1-10); im Grab Tutanchamuns wurden eine Trompete aus Bronze und eine aus Silber gefunden⁽⁴⁸⁾. Und viertens: Wie in Ägypten der Pharao an der Spitze der militärischen Hierarchie stand⁽⁴⁹⁾, so ist es im Buch Numeri Jahwe, der in der Bundeslade das Heer anführt (Num 10,35-36). Diese Ähnlichkeiten machen es insgesamt plausibel, dass sich die Beschreibung der israelitischen Armee im Buch Numeri an dem ägyptischen Vorbild orientiert. Möglicherweise haben die Israeliten die ägyptische Militärordnung mit ihren Familienverbänden bewusst nachgebildet.

Eine militärische Einheit mit dem Namen *מֵאָה* ist folglich nicht nur denkmöglich, sondern auch wahrscheinlich. Dafür sprechen neben biblischen Belegen verschiedener Art auch außerbiblische Quellen.

4. Schätzung der Gesamtpopulation

Eine Schätzung der Gesamtpopulation innerhalb dieses Lösungsmodells kann nur vorgenommen werden, wenn mögliche (hypothetische) Werte für die Größen der *אֶלֶף*- und der *מֵאָה*-Einheiten vorausgesetzt werden. Wenn die Größe einer *אֶלֶף*-Einheit versuchsweise auf durchschnittlich 50 Mann angesetzt wird, erhält man für die rund 600 *אֶלֶף* in den Zensusberichten eine Summe von 30.000 Soldaten. Mit der Annahme, dass das Verhältnis von Frauen und Männern ausgeglichen war und dass die Anzahl der Männer ab 20 Jahren genauso groß war wie die Anzahl der männlichen Personen unter 20 Jahren⁽⁵⁰⁾, ergibt sich eine Gesamtpopulation von 120.000 Menschen. Dieser Wert liegt im Rahmen der in früheren Lösungsvorschlägen als realistisch empfundenen Größenordnungen (5.550 bis 140.000).

Wenn eine *אֶלֶף*-Einheit in der Regel in zehn *מֵאָה*-Einheiten eingeteilt war, dann bestand letztere aus nur fünf Soldaten. Die Einheit der *חֲמִשִּׁים*, die in den Zensusberichten eine Ausnahmeerscheinung darstellt und die wahrscheinlich halb so groß wie eine *מֵאָה*-Einheit war,

BUDD, *Numbers* (WBC 5; Dallas, TX 2002) 18 aufgrund der Wurzel *דגל* in Ps 20,6 u.ä. dafür aus; ähnlich T.R. ASHLEY, *The Book of Numbers* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI 1993) 68. Unabhängig davon weist die Formulierung *בְּאֵתָהּ לְבִית אֶחָד* in Num 2,2 darauf hin, dass es "Feldzeichen" im israelitischen Heer gab, so auch LEVINE, *Numbers*, 144,146.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ PARTRIDGE, *Fighting Pharaohs*, 107-108.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ FAULKNER, "Military Organization", 42.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ WENHAM, "Large Numbers", 31; HUMPHREYS, "Decoding Mathematically", 202.

reduziert sich dann auf zwei bis drei Soldaten⁽⁵¹⁾. Der שר חמשים in 2 Kön 1,9-14 wird dann ein Unteroffizier sein, der mit seinen vielleicht drei Untergebenen zur Ergreifung des Propheten ausgesandt ist. Diese geringe Anzahl ist für den Zweck völlig ausreichend und damit in diesem Kontext wahrscheinlicher als eine Einheit von 50 Mann⁽⁵²⁾.

III. Folgerungen

1. Offene Fragen innerhalb des Modells

Auf zwei offene Fragen muss an dieser Stelle eingegangen werden. Ich gebe lediglich jeweils eine Lösungsidee, die weiterer Forschungsarbeit bedarf, um tatsächlich überzeugend zu sein.

a) Die Zahl 30 in Num 26,7

In Num 26,7 werden 43.730 Rubeniten aufgelistet. Wenn neben "Tausendschaft" auch "Hundertschaft" und "Fünzigenschaft" als Bezeichnungen militärischer Einheiten dienten, dann lassen sich alle Werte in den Zensuslisten Num 1 und 26 in diesem Rahmen interpretieren, abgesehen von der Angabe in Num 26,7 und der davon abhängigen Summe in 26,51. Eine Lösung für dieses Problem könnte sich ergeben, wenn man die griechischen Handschriften zu Rate zieht, speziell den Codex Alexandrinus, der statt 730 den Wert 750 liest⁽⁵³⁾. Die textliche Situation der griechischen Handschriften ist in Num 26 jedoch kompliziert, da viele Varianten existieren, bei denen die Angabe der Summe oft nicht der Summe der Einzelwerte entspricht⁽⁵⁴⁾.

⁽⁵¹⁾ MENDENHALL, "Census Lists", 65 stellt fest, dass in einem der Texte von Alalach einem "Anführer über Zehn" nur drei Soldaten zugeordnet werden, was die Existenz solch kleiner Einheiten plausibel macht.

⁽⁵²⁾ Dagegen scheint es sich in 2 Sam 15,1; 1 Kön 1,5 und 2 Kön 15,25 um mehr als nur zwei bis drei Soldaten zu handeln. An diesen Stellen steht allerdings חמשים איש, was für eine tatsächliche Zahlenangabe stehen könnte (im Gegensatz zu חמשים in 2 Kön 1,9-14).

⁽⁵³⁾ MENDENHALL, "Census Lists", 62 benutzt diesen Wert sogar in einer Gesamtaufstellung mit der Begründung in einer Fußnote, "that units in such lists are nearly always in even hundreds or fifties".

⁽⁵⁴⁾ U. QUAST, "Zahlen und Zahlenreihen in Num 26", *De Septuaginta*. Studies in Honor of John William Wevers (eds. A. PIETERSMA — C. COX) (Missis-sauga 1984) 103-114 liefert einen Überblick. So hat der Alexandrinus in der Summe in Num 26,51 die dem MT entsprechende Lesart 601.730. Die sich aus einer Änderung von 730 zu 750 in 26,7 ergebende Summe 601.750 hat dagegen nur eine Handschrift (58), siehe QUAST, "Zahlen", 104.

Dennoch müssen zwei Dinge festgehalten werden: Erstens gibt es für eine Änderung von *τριάκοντα* zu *πεντήκοντα* im Alexandrinus keinen ersichtlichen Grund⁽⁵⁵⁾. Und zweitens taucht 750 nicht nur im Alexandrinus, sondern auch in einigen anderen Handschriften auf, die jedoch nicht alle dem alexandrinischen Texttyp zugerechnet werden⁽⁵⁶⁾. Mit anderen Worten: Die Ursprünglichkeit der Lesart des Alexandrinus ist nicht unwahrscheinlicher als die Ursprünglichkeit der Lesart des MT.

b) Die Abgabe in Ex 38,25-26

In Ex 38,25-26 wird eine Abgabe für das Heiligtum beschrieben, die von den "Gemusterten der Gemeinde" über zwanzig Jahren erhoben wird, und zwar ein halber Silberschekel "pro Kopf". Die Summe von 100 Talenten und 1.775 Schekeln ergibt sich aus der im Text genannten Anzahl von 603.550 Gemusterten⁽⁵⁷⁾. Dass der Text mit dem Zensusbericht Num 1 in Beziehung steht, ist somit offensichtlich. Weniger offensichtlich ist jedoch, wie dieser Text, der über Individuen und nicht über militärische Einheiten zu sprechen scheint, im Rahmen des hier beschriebenen Modells sinnvoll interpretiert werden kann.

Ein Ansatzpunkt könnte die Formulierung "ein Beka pro Kopf, ein halber Schekel" in V. 26 sein. Mit dieser Maßeinheit beläuft sich die Summe somit auf 603.550 Beka. גלגלה kann einerseits "Schädel" bedeuten (Ri 9,53; 2 Kön 9,35 und 1 Chr 10,10), andererseits wird das Wort in "pro Kopf"-Formulierungen verwendet (Ex 16,16; Num 3,47 wie in Ex 38,25-26 mit einer Abgabe von Schekeln). Den Großteil der insgesamt zwölf Vorkommen machen jedoch Zählungen von Menschen aus, die "nach ihren Köpfen" gezählt werden: Neben der Levitenzählung in 1 Chr 23,3.24 sind dies die Stellen Num 1,2.18.20.22 im ersten Zensusbericht. Bei der traditionellen Interpretation der Zensuslisten, die von gerundeten hohen Zahlenangaben ausgeht, wird לגלגלה nicht wörtlich verstanden. Und auch im Rahmen dieses Lösungsansatzes ist eine nichtwörtliche Verwendung des Ausdrucks

⁽⁵⁵⁾ QUAIST, "Zahlen", 105.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ QUAIST, "Zahlen", 105.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ Hieraus ergibt sich beiläufig, dass ein Talent 3.000 Schekeln entsprach, was mit den Gegebenheiten in Ugarit übereinstimmt, vgl. DE VAUX, *Ancient Israel*, 204. Die Umrechnung von 300.000 Schekeln in 100 Talente (V.26) wird mit der getrennten Verwendungsweise der Talente (V.27) und der restlichen 1.775 Schekel (V.28) zusammenhängen.

“nach ihren Köpfen” mit einer Interpretation von Num 1 und 26 als Zählung von militärischen Einheiten vereinbar. Möglicherweise liegt auch in Ex 38,26 eine nichtwörtliche, figurative Verwendung des Ausdrucks vor. Eine Vermutung wäre, dass mit der Angabe 603.550 auch hier militärische Einheiten gemeint sind, und zwar dieselben 603 הָאֵלֶּף -Einheiten und fünfeinhalb מֵאָה -Einheiten, die in Num 1 genannt werden. Das würde bedeuten, dass an eine Abgabe von 1.000 Beka, also 500 Schekeln, für jede הָאֵלֶּף -Einheit gedacht war, dass also, vielleicht auf der Polysemie von הָאֵלֶּף basierend, zumindest nominell ein Betrag von einem halben Schekel pro Mann veranschlagt wurde.

2. Andere biblische Zahlenangaben

Der hier beschriebene Lösungsansatz zur Interpretation der großen Zahlen in Num 1 und 26 ist in sich konsistent. Auch zum Lagerbericht in Num 2 ergeben sich keine Widersprüche, da dort dieselben Tausender- und Hunderterangaben mit Übertrag summiert werden wie in Num 1.

Die Angaben der Levitenzählungen in Num 3 und 4 sowie Num 26,57-62 können ebenfalls im Rahmen des hier dargestellten Modells interpretiert werden. Die Levitenzählungen stehen nicht in einem militärischen Kontext, sondern in einem kultischen. Daher werden keine Aussagen über wehrfähige Männer gemacht, sondern über männliche Personen ab einem Monat (Num 3,15; 26,62) sowie über die zum Dienst berufenen Leviten zwischen 30 und 50 Jahren (Num 4,3). Vielleicht lässt sich daraus erklären, dass die Summen der gezählten הָאֵלֶּף -Einheiten der Leviten mit 22 (Num 3,39), 23 (Num 26,62) und 8 (Num 4,48) weit unterhalb des durchschnittlichen Wertes für die übrigen Stämme ($600 / 12 = 50$) liegen. Denn in einem kultischen Kontext ist es denkbar, dass eine “Einheit”, die dann nicht militärisch, sondern als Dienstgruppe zu verstehen ist, aus einer anderen Anzahl von Personen besteht⁽⁵⁸⁾.

Auch andere Zahlenangaben, die gewöhnlich als zu groß empfunden werden, lassen sich gut als Angaben für militärische Einheiten interpretieren. Als Beispiele mögen die Texte aus dem

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Schwierigkeiten bereitet bei dem Levitenzensus in Num 4 die Angabe 2.630 für die dienstfähigen Gersoniter (Num 4,40). Denn während die Zahl 30 in Num 26,7 mit Hilfe einiger griechischer Handschriften möglicherweise als 50 und damit als Bezeichnung einer militärischen Einheit verstanden werden kann, fehlt ein solcher Befund für Num 4,40 völlig.

JosuaBuch dienen, die von den Kämpfen der Landnahmezeit berichten. So reduzieren sich die 3.000 Soldaten, die zur Einnahme der kleinen Stadt Ai abkommandiert wurden (Jos 7,4) auf drei הָלָא -Einheiten, also vielleicht 150 Mann. Ein Verlust von 36 Mann (Jos 7,5) ist in diesem Fall natürlich bedeutsamer als bei einer Gesamtstärke von 3.000 Soldaten⁽⁵⁹⁾.

3. Hermeneutische Perspektiven

Wenn man im Rahmen eines kanonischen Ansatzes davon ausgeht, dass der biblische Text in seiner uns vorliegenden Endgestalt "seine eigene Aussage zu machen hat"⁽⁶⁰⁾, so muss das auch für die Zensusberichte im Buch Numeri gelten. Was ist nun bei einer synchronen Auslegung die vom Verfasser des Endtextes intendierte Bedeutung⁽⁶¹⁾ von Num 1 und 26? Bei den im Forschungsüberblick vorgestellten Lösungsansätzen wäre dies ein Zensus mit dem Ergebnis von mehr als 600.000 wehrfähigen Männern, wobei man im Rahmen einer diachronen Analyse eine andere Bedeutung der Vorstufe(n) des Endtextes annehmen müsste.

Der hier dargestellte Lösungsversuch kann die historische Lücke zwischen synchroner und diachroner Auslegung für die Zensusberichte schließen. Denn gegenüber früheren Lösungsvorschlägen beruht das hier beschriebene Modell nicht auf der Annahme, dass ein späterer Schreiber die ursprüngliche Bedeutung von הָלָא missverstanden und die Zahlenangaben fehlinterpretiert hat. Vorausgesetzt wird also, dass der Endtext das wiedergibt, was schon die ersten Tradenten der Zensusberichte ausdrücken wollten: eine Zählung der militärischen Einheiten zur Zeit der Landnahme. Ein tatsächlicher Bedeutungswandel entstand nicht auf dem Weg zum Endtext, sondern vielmehr durch die Übersetzung des Textes (bzw. seiner Vorstufen), da seit den Tagen der Septuaginta הָלָא und מֵאָה in Num 1 und 26 als Zahlenangaben missverstanden wurden.

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⁽⁵⁹⁾ So auch ZERBST, "Größe", 125-126.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ R. RENDTORFF, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*. Ein kanonischer Entwurf (Neukirchen 2001) II, 283.

⁽⁶¹⁾ Vgl. RENDTORFF, *Theologie*, II, 287-288.

SUMMARY

The objective of this article is to present a research report on the census lists in Num 1 and 26 as well as to make a new proposal concerning the interpretation of the large numbers. Following Petrie and Mendenhall, the word **אלף** is not understood as “a thousand” but as the name of a military unit. In addition, **מאה** is interpreted as a military unit, too. The plausibility of its existence is shown by means of biblical and extra-biblical sources. In conclusion, there is no need to assume that a writer or redactor confused different meanings of **אלף**. The population at the time of the Conquest is estimated as 120,000 people.

ANIMADVERSIONES

Jezebel's Oath (1 Kgs 19,2)

1 Kgs 19 begins with Ahab reporting to Jezebel events that had taken place on the Mount Carmel. It is the first time the reader witnesses Jezebel in person and hears her own words. Perhaps not entirely unexpected, Jezebel's reaction to the impotency of her god and to the murder of her cultic personnel was not surrender to Yahwism, but instead, words of vengeance to Elijah for killing her protégés — at least vengeance was what Elijah was supposed to see. As it turns out, Elijah was not the only one deceived by the words of the queen. Many current biblical scholars also fall into her deception. Keinänen, for instance, see Jezebel as “furious, intending to wreak revenge on Elijah who fled to save his life”⁽¹⁾, and Provan adds that “given her track record (18,4.13), she is to be taken seriously”⁽²⁾. House also echoes that “Elijah has no reason to doubt her threats indicate her true intentions”⁽³⁾.

But Jezebel may have had no intentions of fulfilling her threat. First of all, if she really wanted to kill Elijah, she would have sent a killer and not a messenger (19,2). Many commentators have noticed this, but they often see it not as a deliberate development of the plot, but either as an editorial bridge connecting the accounts of Mount Carmel with Elijah's trip to Mount Horeb⁽⁴⁾ or simply as a possible weakness in the plot⁽⁵⁾. Careful analysis of the text, however, unveils Jezebel's clever tactic to make the prophet run away rather than turning him into a celebrated martyr. His escape, much more than his death, would undermine his victory at Mount Carmel.

Surprisingly, nobody seems to have entertained the possibility that Jezebel purposely used an incomplete oath in order to threaten Elijah. The fact that the oath lacks the expected ׃ has of course been observed by many, but this is usually considered a scribal omission. The BHS critical apparatus states that many manuscripts and all or most versions complete the oath formula by inserting ׃ . As Montgomery states, such a completed oath has been generally accepted, and Thenius and Stade's opinion — that it is inconceivable that the early copyist would omit such a reference to the

(¹) J. KEINÄNEN, *Traditions in Collision. A Literary and Redaction-Critical Study on the Elijah Narratives 1 Kings 17–19* (Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 80; Helsinki/Göttingen 2001) 164.

(²) I.W. PROVAN, *1 and 2 Kings* (NIBC 7; Peabody, MA – Carlisle, PA 1995) 143.

(³) P.R. HOUSE, *1, 2 Kings* (NAC 8; Nashville, TN 1995) 221.

(⁴) So W. THIEL, *Könige* (BKATF IX.2.3; Neukirchen – Vluyn 2007) 225. Similarly V. FRITZ, *Das erste Buch der Könige* (ZBKAT 10.1; Zürich 1996) 175; S. J. DEVRIES, *1 Kings* (WBC 12; Waco, TX 1985) 235; G. HENTSCHEL *1 Könige* (NEB 10; Würzburg 1984) 116; and others.

(⁵) An option mentioned by Walsh but not preferred by him. J.T. WALSH, *1 Kings* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN 1996) 265.

queen — seems to be put aside by the present biblical scholarship⁽⁶⁾. It can be argued, however, that the MT's version of the oath is original and the insertion of לִּי in 1 Kgs 19,2 is a result of a process of standardization of the oath formula, the process of which is probably best seen in LXX⁽⁷⁾.

Due to the consensus of most biblical scholars that לִּי in 1 Kgs 19,2 was omitted by a scribe (though no ground is given for such an omission) and consequently should be inserted in the text (as reflected in most if not all ancient versions), the development of the plot as presented in MT is almost lost to today's scholarship. This fact becomes obvious when browsing through the recent publications mentioning or analyzing the passage. They either supply the reference to Jezebel (sometimes mentioning in a footnote that it is omitted in the MT), or put it in the brackets. But omission of the reference to Jezebel herself in her oath-curse formula could actually be made purposely to indicate that the queen was not intending to follow up on her threat.

All occurrences of the oath $\text{כֹּה} + \text{אֱלֹהִים/יְהוָה} + \text{עֲשֵׂה} + \text{א} + \text{form of } \text{יִכָּף}$ have a person that is under the oath introduced by a preposition לִּי . There are only two exceptions to this principle: 1 Sam 14,44 and 1 Kgs 19,2⁽⁸⁾. Looking at all the instances of the oath⁽⁹⁾, one can see that whenever the oath includes the prepositional phrase $\text{לִּי} + \text{a personal pronoun}$ or a personal name, some actions are undertaken by the person under the oath/curse to secure the fulfilment of the words. However, such actions are not undertaken in the two passages mentioned above, which do not specify the person under the oath / curse. This fact suggests that there was no intention on the part of the speaker to do whatever was said under the oath. Thus, 1 Sam 14,44 presents Saul's oath in which the king swears that Jonathan would surely die because of his disobedience to the king's order.

⁽⁶⁾ J.A. MONTGOMERY, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Books of Kings* (ed. H.S. GEHMAN) (Edinburgh 1951) 317. One of the exceptions is Yael ZIEGLER's article "'So Shall God Do ...': Variations of an Oath Formula and its Literary Meaning", *JBL* 126 (2007) 59-81. His interpretation, however, differs from the one presented in this article.

⁽⁷⁾ All occurrences of the oath in LXX are identical ($\text{τάδε ποιήσας ... ὁ θεὸς καὶ τάδε προσθήη}$), despite different renderings of the oath in MT. LXX consistently uses, for instance, ὁ θεός (with the exception of Ru 1,17), even though Masoretic 1 Sam 20,13 has יְהוָה , and not אֱלֹהִים , and despite the fact that the forms of verbs in MT's 1 Kgs 19,2 and 1 Kgs 20,10 suggest a plural understanding of אֱלֹהִים , namely, οἱ θεοί . Another example of standardization of the oath in LXX is the addition of a pronoun referring to the person under the oath to the oath formula in 1 Sam 14,44 and 1 Kgs 19,2, which is otherwise lacking in MT. Since the tendency of standardization is more probable than the omitting of different elements of an already set and unchangeable oath formula, one should therefore see the tradition behind MT as prior to the one reflected in the LXX.

⁽⁸⁾ In both cases the prepositional phrase is added in almost every version of the text (unfortunately, 1 Sam 14,44 is missing from 4QSam^a, 4QSam^b, and 4QSam^c). An unintentional omission by a scribe, however, is unlikely as there is no reason to posit an error due to homeoteleuton or homeoarchy. The intentional omission is also difficult to explain due to the existence of the standardized version of the oath. On the other hand, it is highly probable that a scribe would intentionally add the phrase, thus completing the standardized formula, rather than deliberately omit part of the set expression.

⁽⁹⁾ Ru 1,17; 1 Sam 3,17; 14,44; 20,13; 25,22; 2 Sam 3,9; 3,35; 19,14; 1 Kgs 2,23; 19,2; 20,10; 2 Kgs 6,31.

The oath, however, did not state who was to be punished by God should the matter not be followed through. One therefore suspects that the king was not truly intending to kill his own son. And as it turns out, he did not. The pro-Jonathan sentiments of the people served as an excuse not to fulfil the insincerely-spoken oath.

In case of Jezebel, not only did she not follow up on her words, but she in fact acted against them — she warned Elijah, thus making it possible for him to escape from the country. It is, then, another beautifully crafted clue the narrator left, together with the sending of a mere death threat and not a sword, that Jezebel wanted Elijah alive but in a self-imposed exile.

There is also another detail in 19,2 that supports the latter claim. It is that the time when Elijah's נֶפֶשׁ was to become כֹּהֵן of one of the prophets of Baal. Jezebel set that time to be בַּעַת חֹמֶר. The only reason that would explain letting Elijah know the exact time for the realization of the threat would be to make him run for his life. And this is exactly what the prophet did.

In summary, the oath formula as present in MT portrays Jezebel as a very calm and clever queen. On the one hand, she was not frightened when confronted with the massacre of her cultic personnel. On the other, she was also not blinded by her fury or willingness to vengeance. Swearing by her gods she did not dare to put herself under oath but let Elijah supply the missing reference to her. The prophet, frightened by her spoken but unintended threat, did what she wanted him to do — expelled himself from the country leaving confused supporters behind him.

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SUMMARY

Jezebel's oath, as recorded in 1 Kgs 19,2, gives some clues that from the beginning it was not intended to be kept. One such indication is the lack of the prepositional phrase לְ. Lack of the phrase coupled with other contextual clues paints a picture of Jezebel as a calm and clever queen and, at the same time, it exposes Elijah's unreasonable fear and inability to see the true matter of things.

Tobit 4,19 and Romans 9,18: An Intertextual Study

Among some major commentaries on Romans, the only author who makes any mention at all of a relationship between Rom 9,18 and Tob 4,19 is James D.G. Dunn⁽¹⁾, who does so only in passing by referring to another scholar, simply writing: “Mayer, 195, refers particularly to 1 Sam 2,25 [*sic*, read 2,7]; Tob 4,19; Jud[ith] 8,14-15”⁽²⁾. But Mayer makes no further comment on Tob 4,19. Yet, as we shall see, there seems to be an intertextual connection between these texts of Romans and Tobit.

The story of Tobit and his family is well known. Though he had lead a pious life, observing all the commands of the Law (1,1-12), he suffered many adversities. In addition to being sought out by the authorities for burying the dead (1,19) he became totally blind (2,10), with the result that he suffered the further indignity of having to rely on his wife for support (2,11) — the ultimate embarrassment for a Jewish man in the society of that day (see Sir 25,22). When Tobit refused to believe that the kid goat his wife Anna had received as a bonus from her employers, demanding that she give it back (2,13), Anna finally retorted, with ample justification, “Where are your alms, and where are your righteous acts? (2,14)” — a well deserved rebuke that pushed Tobit over the edge, so to speak. That is why he prayed for death (3,1-6)⁽³⁾. He believed, accordingly, that the Lord would let him die. Hence, he summoned his son Tobiah and gave him what he thought would be his farewell address (4,3-19.21). The key verse is 4,19 in Greek II (= G^{II}). Since Codex Sinaiticus has a large lacuna in chap. 4 (4,7-19a), I supply what is missing in S from the G^{II} MS. 319, which preserves the missing text⁽⁴⁾. I likewise give some textual variants from G^I and from the Old Latin, which was translated from a G^{II} text type⁽⁵⁾:

(1) J.D.G. DUNN, *Romans 9-16* (WBC 38B; Dallas, TX 1988) 555. For providing me with this information I am grateful to my colleague F.J. Matera, the Andrews-Kelly-Ryan Professor of New Testament at The Catholic University of America.

(2) The book to which Dunn is referring was written by B. MAYER, *Unter Gottes Heilsratschluss. Prädestinationsaussagen bei Paul* (Würzburg 1974).

(3) See A.A. DI LELLA, “Two Major Prayers in the Book of Tobit”, *Prayer from Tobit to Qumran*. Inaugural Conference to the ISDCL at Salzburg, Austria, 6.-9. July 2003 (eds. R. EGGER-WENZEL – J. CORLEY) (Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2004; Berlin – New York 2004) 95-115.

(4) C.A. MOORE, *Tobit. A New Translation and Commentary* (AB 40A; New York 1996) 162 and J.A. FITZMYER, *Tobit* (Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature; Berlin – New York 2003) 165, 178, apparently failed to note that MS. 319 does contain the full text of Tob 4,19, as I give it below. Yet both scholars had available and employed the critical edition of R. HANHART (ed.), *Tobit* (Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum Graecum auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis 8/5; Göttingen 1983), which contains the text of Tob 4,19 in MS. 319, which, however, must be recovered carefully from the apparatus of G^{II}.

(5) I employ the edition of R. HANHART (ed.), *Tobit*, 181-182. Hanhart provides two complete forms of the Book of Tobit in Greek. He calls these forms (or recensions) Greek I (= G^I), the shorter text form, and Greek II (= G^{II}), the longer form (by about 1700 words). Almost all major manuscripts — Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, Venetus, Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1594 (= 990), and most cursive manuscripts — contain G^I of Tobit, which Hanhart prints

G ¹ (MSS. 319 and S)	My Translation	G ¹ and Old Latin variants
ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ εὐλόγει (εὐλόγη 319) τὸν θεόν καὶ παρ' αὐτοῦ αἰτησάι (αἰτῆσαι 319) ὅπως εὐθεῖαι αἱ ὁδοί σου γένωνται (γένονται 319) καὶ πάσαι αἱ τρίβοι σου εὐοδοθῶσιν (εὐοδοθῶσιν 319), διότι πᾶν ἔθνος οὐκ ἔχει βουλὴν ἀγαθὴν, ἀλλὰ αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος διδωσιν.	At every moment bless God and ask of him that your ways may be straight, and all your paths may succeed, for not every nation has good counsel, but the Lord himself gives it.	κύριον τὸν θεὸν (G ¹)/Deo (Dominum CM) ἀλλὰ αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος διδωσιν πάντα τὰ ἀγαθὰ
καὶ ὃν ἐὰν θέλῃ αὐτὸς ὑψοί (καὶ ... ὑψοί omit S) καὶ ὃν ἂν θέλῃ (θέλει 319) αὐτὸς (κύριος S) ταπεινοί ἕως ἄδου κατατάτω (κάτω 319).	And whom he wills he himself raises on high, and whom he wills he himself [the Lord S] humbles down to lowest Hades.	καὶ ὃν ἐὰν θέλῃ ταπεινοί καθὼς βούλεται. <i>Quem ergo uoluerit ipse alleuat et quem uoluerit ipse demergit usque ad inferos deorsum.</i>
καὶ νῦν, παιδίον, μνημόνευε τὰς ἐντολάς μου (omit S) καὶ μὴ ἐξαλειφθήτωσαν ἐκ τῆς καρδίας σου.	Now therefore, my child, remember my commandments, and do not let them be erased from your heart.	

The text of the italicized sentence above from G^{II} is different in G^I (given above), which says, “And the one whom he wishes he humbles, just as he wills”. Not surprisingly, support of the better reading in 319 of G^{II} comes from the Old Latin: *quem ergo uoluerit [quemcunque uult C] ipse alleuat [dominus exaltat CM] et quem uoluerit ipse [quemcunque uult C] demergit [humiliat et deponet C] usque ad inferos deorsum* ⁽⁶⁾, “The one whom he wills he raises

at the top of the page with its apparatus underneath. G^{II} is found relatively intact only in Codex Sinaiticus (= S) and partially (from 3,6 to the word τούτον in 6,16) in cursive MS. 319, which however gives G^I from 1,1 to 3,5 and from 6,16 ὅτι to 14,15. MS. S, unfortunately, contains many copyists' errors and has two significant lacunae (4,7-19b, as mentioned above, and 13,6i-10b). The Cave IV fragmentary texts of Tobit (four in Aramaic, 4QTob^{a-d} ar, and one in Hebrew, 4QTob^e) "agree in general with the long recension of the book found in the fourth-century Greek text of codex Sinaiticus", J.A. FITZMYER, "Tobit", *Qumran Cave 4, XIV. Parabiblical Texts. Part 2* (eds. M. BROSHI et al.) (DJD 19; Oxford 1995) 2. J.A. FITZMYER, "The Aramaic and Hebrew Fragments of Tobit from Qumran Cave 4", *CBQ* 57 (1995) 675, writes that the Qumran fragments preserve "perhaps not more than a fifth of the original Semitic texts", and then he adds that "there is little in (these fragments) that is radically new, or different from the form of the story in either (Sinaiticus) or the VL". He dates the copies of these fragments from roughly 100 B.C. to A.D. 50 (ibid., 655-657).

(*) The Old Latin text is taken from: A.E. BROOKE – N. MCLEAN – H. ST THACKERAY (eds.), *The Old Testament in Greek* (Cambridge 1940) III, I, 131. I cite only the principal variants, primarily from MS. C, "which most closely reproduces the S-type of text" (ibid., ix).

[the Lord exalts C] on high, and the one whom he wishes he casts down [the humbles and throws down C] to the netherworld below”.

In 4,19 according to Gⁿ 319, Tobit clearly refers to the doctrine of Israel’s election when he affirms that God has total freedom of choice in granting good counsel only to Israel, for he alone has the power to lift up as he wills and to cast down as he wills. This affirmation reflects what we find in Dan 2,21, both in the MT Aramaic and essentially in the two Greek forms of the book. I cite only the Theodotion-Daniel text: καὶ αὐτὸς ἄλλοιοῖ καιροὺς καὶ χρόνους, καθιστᾷ βασιλεῖς καὶ μεθιστᾷ, διδοὺς σοφίαν τοῖς σοφοῖς καὶ φρόνησιν τοῖς εἰδόσιν σύνεσιν, “And he himself changes the seasons and times; he sets up kings and removes them, giving wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who understand(?)” (my translation).

In Rom 9,1-29 Paul emphasizes that the word of God has not failed but indeed remains operative because of Israel’s election. He explains in 9,14-18 an essential aspect of his teaching on God’s election of Israel. In particular he states in 9,18: ἄρα οὖν ὃν θέλει (+ ὁ θεός D *pc a m* vg^{MS}; Ambst) ἐλεεῖ, ὃν δὲ θέλει σκληρύνει⁽⁸⁾, “Now, therefore, he has mercy upon whom he [some MSS.: God] wills, and he hardens whom he wills” (my translation). Paul’s last clause harks back, of course, to the many OT passages regarding the Lord’s hardening Pharaoh’s heart⁽⁹⁾.

Paul emphasizes that God’s sovereign choices do not depend on human will or agency; rather, God is free to act in human affairs exactly as he wills. This idea forms the basis of the divine election of Israel⁽¹⁰⁾. Paul seems to have borrowed the key phrase ὃν θέλει (Rom 9,18) from Tob 4,19, ὃν ἂν θέλῃ, because in that verse the author of Tobit also stresses the doctrine of election.

In fact, the phrase ὃν θέλει recurs, remarkably, only twice in the entire NT (both times in Rom 9,18) and likewise only twice as the similar phrase ὃν ἂν θέλῃ in the LXX (both times in Tob 4,19 of Gⁿ MS. 319). The phrase appears in texts dealing with the absolute will of God to have mercy on whom he wills and to harden whom he wills (Romans), and to raise on high whom he wills and to cast down whom he wills (Tobit). These two passages are embedded in roughly similar contexts about divine election and the sovereignty of God in dealing with Israel and the Gentiles; this similarity makes all the more forceful the striking twofold repetition of the very rare phrase ὃν ἂν θέλῃ in Gⁿ MS. 319 of Tob 4,19 and its virtually identical twofold repetition in the equally rare ὃν θέλει in Rom 9,18.

It appears quite reasonable to conclude that in composing Rom 9,18 Paul had in mind especially the text of Tob 4,19, ὃν ἂν θέλῃ only in its Gⁿ MS. 319 form, from which he borrowed the repetition of the key phrase ὃν θέλει,

⁽⁷⁾ I quote this text from the critical edition of J. ZIEGLER – O. MUNNICH (eds.), *Susanna, Daniel, Bel et Draco* (Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum 16.2; Göttingen 1999) 249.

⁽⁸⁾ Text taken from K. ALAND et al. (eds.), *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece* (Stuttgart 1983) 425.

⁽⁹⁾ See, for example, Exod 4,21; 7,3; 9,12; 10,1.20.27; 11,10; 14,4.8.17.

⁽¹⁰⁾ See F.J. MATERA, *New Testament Theology. Exploring Diversity and Unity* (Louisville, KY – London 2007) 190.

because this phrase served to highlight his theology of the divine election of Israel, a doctrine that is central also in the theology of the Book of Tobit.

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SUMMARY

In this short article I explain how Paul and the author of Tobit share a common theology of Israel's divine election. Then I analyze the texts and contexts of the rare phrase ὃν ὅν θέλει in G^u MS. 319 of Tob 4,19 and equally rare ὃν θέλει in Rom 9,18. From this analysis it seems reasonable to conclude that in composing Rom 9,18, Paul had in mind the virtually identical phrase found in Tob 4,19.

Reading the Ransom Logion in 1 Tim 2,6 and Titus 2,14 with Isa 42,6-7; 49,6-8

The reception of the ransom logion in 1 Tim 2,6 and Titus 2,14 has occasioned much discussion. However, very little of this discussion, if any at all, involves observing how the logion is similarly received in both works. In this short study I will demonstrate that in 1 Tim 2,6 and Titus 2,14 the same author exhibits a pattern of reading the ransom logion in light of Isa 42,6-7; 49,6-8.

Mark 10,45c	καὶ δοῦναι	τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ	λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν
1 Tim 2,6	ὁ δοὺς	ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον	ὑπὲρ πάντων
Titus 2,14	ἔδωκεν	ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν,	ἵνα λυτρώσῃται

The above comparison demonstrates why there is little doubt among scholars that 1 Tim 2,6 and Titus 2,14 are influenced by a version of the ransom logion similar to that found in Mark 10,45c. In what follows, I would like to discuss how these two occurrences of the ransom logion in the Pastorals are read in light of Isa 42,6-7; 49,6-8. I begin my discussion with the logion in Titus 2,14.

The ransom logion in Titus 2,14 is augmented by two ἵνα clauses that serve to expand its meaning. The two ἵνα clauses following the self-giving statement (ὃς ἔδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν) are (1) ἵνα λυτρώσῃται ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀνομίας, and (2) καὶ [ἵνα] καθάρισις ἑαυτῷ λαὸν περιούσιον. The vast majority of the secondary literature sees the same texts behind the first and second ἵνα clauses. The first ἵνα clause is said to be influenced by Ps 130,8 [129,8 LXX], the second ἵνα clause is influenced by Exod 19,5, and both clauses are influenced by Ezek 37,23⁽¹⁾. I would like to suggest instead that Isa 42,6-7 and 49,6-7 are behind the two ἵνα clauses. I suggest this because the two ἵνα clauses in Titus 2,14 are almost completely parallel to *Barn* 14,6, and *Barn* 14,6 is nothing more than the author's summary of Isa 42,6-7; 49,6-7, which is quoted in *Barn* 14,7-8. In what follows, I parallel the two ἵνα clauses from Titus 2,14 alongside *Barn* 14,6.

Titus 2,14a	ἵνα λυτρώσῃται	ἡμᾶς	ἀπὸ πάσης ἀνομίας
<i>Barn</i> 14,6a	λυτρωσάμενον	ἡμᾶς	ἐκ τοῦ σκότους,
Titus 2,14b	καὶ καθάρισις	ἑαυτῷ	λαὸν περιούσιον
<i>Barn</i> 14,6b	ἐτοιμάσαι	ἑαυτῷ	λαὸν ἅγιον

(1) F. BÜCHSEL, "λύτρον, ἀντίλυτρον, λυτρώω, λύτρωσις, λυτρωτής, ἀπολύτρωσις", *TDNT*, IV, 351 n. 14; T. KNÖPPLER, *Sühne im Neue Testament*. Studien urchristlichen Verständnis der Heilsbedeutung des Todes Jesu (WMANT 88; Neukirchen-Vluyn 2001) 186; A. LAU, *Manifest in Flesh*. The Epiphany Christology of the Pastoral Epistles (WUNT II/86; Tübingen 1996) 151-52; I.H. MARSHALL, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh 1999) 284-285; L. OBERLINNER, *Die Pastoralbriefe*. Dritte folge, Kommentar zum Titusbrieff (HTKNT XI/2; Freiburg 1996) 138; H. STETTLER, *Die Christologie der Pastoralbriefe* (WUNT II/103; Tübingen 1998) 260; P. TOWNER, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI 2006) 760-766; *et al.*

Barn 14,6 shares the same concepts and unbroken word order with both ἵνα clauses of Titus 2,14. As I have already stated, *Barn* 14,6 is simply the author's summary of Isa 42,6-7; 49,6-7, quoted in *Barn* 14,7-8.

- Barn* 14,6 γέγραπται γὰρ πῶς αὐτῷ ὁ πατὴρ ἐντέλλεται, λυτρωσάμενον ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ σκοτίου, ἐτοιμάσαι ἑαυτῷ λαὸν ἅγιον.
- Barn* 14,7 λέγει οὖν ὁ προφήτης· Ἐγὼ Κύριος ὁ Θεός σου ἐκάλεσά σε ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, καὶ κρατήσω τῆς χειρός σου καὶ ἐνισχύσω σε, καὶ ἔδωκά σε εἰς διαθήκην γένους, εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν, ἀνοίξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς τυφλῶν, καὶ ἐξαγαγεῖν ἐκ δεσμῶν πεπεδημένους καὶ ἐξ οἴκου φυλακῆς καθημένους ἐν σκότει (Isa 42,6-7). γινώσκουμεν οὖν πόθεν ἐλυτρώθημεν.
- Barn* 14,8 πάλιν ὁ προφήτης λέγει· Ἰδοὺ, τέθεικά σε εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν, τοῦ εἶναι σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς· οὕτως λέγει Κύριος ὁ λυτρωσάμενός σε Θεός (Isa 49,6-7).

What initially makes the summarizing function of *Barn* 14,6 evident is the introductory language of γέγραπται. Also, the phrase in 14,6, αὐτῷ ὁ πατὴρ ἐντέλλεται, is a reference to God's (the Father's) call on the Isaianic servant (Jesus) in Isa 42,6/*Barn* 14,7. Further, Barnabas' language of ἐκ τοῦ σκοτίου in 14,6 comes from the quotation of Isa 42,6-7 in *Barn* 14,7. The -λυτ language in 14,6 could be influence from Isa 49,6-7, which is quoted in *Barn* 14,8, though *Barn* is the only witness to -λυτ in the Greek text of Isa⁽²⁾. Given the strong parallel between *Barn* 14,6 and the two ἵνα clauses in Titus 2,14, we are certainly justified to suggest that like *Barn* 14,6, the two ἵνα clauses in Titus 2,14 are also a summary of Isa 42,6-7; 49,6-7⁽³⁾.

If the ransom logion in Titus 2,14 is intertwined with a summary of Isa 42,6-7; 49,6-7, then we might question if the same author reads the ransom logion in 1 Tim 2,6 with the same texts from Isa. There are two reasons to think that the author does. First, in Isa 42,6; 49,8 and in 1 Tim 2,1-7 there is a shared emphasis on universal salvation⁽⁴⁾. It was common for early Christian writers to allude to Isa 42,6 or 49,8 as proof that God's salvation extends to everyone, even the gentiles⁽⁵⁾. If we think of 1 Tim 2,1-7 in the context of early Christian appeals to scripture supporting the extension of salvation to the gentiles, then we would hardly be surprised if Isa 42,6; 49,8 were behind the universal emphasis of 1 Tim 2,1-7. Second, the language of mediator (μεσίτης) in 1 Tim 2,5 likely implies a covenant (διαθήκη)⁽⁶⁾. The

⁽²⁾ It could also be that the -λυτ term in *Barn* 14,5-8 is due to influence from the ransom logion.

⁽³⁾ The connection between Titus 2,14 and Isa 42,6-7; 49,6-7 is almost completely missed in modern scholarship because the connection between Titus 2,14 and *Barn* 14,6 is never appreciated. This connection between Titus 2,14 and *Barn* 14,6 is not a secret. It is listed in *Biblia Patristica* I, 518, and A Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology, *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford 1905) 14.

⁽⁴⁾ In 1 Tim the concern is explicitly for all people (πάντων ἀνθρώπων – 2,1; πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων – 2,2; πάντας ἀνθρώπους – 2,4), even the gentiles (ἐθνῶν – 2,7).

⁽⁵⁾ Luke 2,32; Acts 26,18,23; *Barn* 14,1-8; Justin *Dial* 26, 121-122; Tertullian *AdvJud* 12; *AdvMarc* 3,20,4; 5,6,1.

⁽⁶⁾ In the NT, μεσίτης is almost always linked with the idea of covenant (Gal 3,19-20; Heb 8,6; 9,15; 12,24).

vocabulary of בְּרִית / διαθήκη occurs in Isa 42,6 and 49,8⁽⁷⁾, and it is probable that the peculiar phrase (בְּרִית עַם) in Isa 42,6 and 49,8 indicates a covenant mediator (μεσότης)⁽⁸⁾. It is easy to see how the thought in 1 Tim 2,5 immediately preceding the ransom logion that “there is one God and one [covenant] mediator between God and all humanity” is perfectly parallel to the servant texts of Isa 42,6-7 and 49,6-8.

In conclusion, previous studies on the Pastorals have failed to observe how the same author reads the ransom logion through the same texts of Isa 42,6-7; 49,6-8. Such a reading makes sense of the two ἵνα clauses in Titus 2,14 as well as the idea of covenant mediator, combined with a universal perspective, in 1 Tim 2,1-7. It also provides another line of evidence that in early Christianity the ransom logion was typically read through the lens of the Isaianic servant, though not always through Isa 53⁽⁹⁾.

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SUMMARY

In this study I argue that the same author reads the ransom logion in 1 Tim 2,6 and Titus 2,14 in light of Isa 42,6-7; 49,6-8. The primary evidences are the parallel between the two ἵνα clauses in Titus 2,14 and *Barn* 14,6, as well as the idea of covenant mediator, combined with a universal perspective, in 1 Tim 2,1-7. Taken together, these evidences strongly suggest influence from Isa 42,6-7; 49,6-8.

⁽⁷⁾ There is a LXX variant of διαθήκη in 49,6.

⁽⁸⁾ M. SMITH, “Berît ‘Am/Berît ‘Olām: A New Proposal for the Crux of Isa 42:6”, *JBL* 100 (1981) 241-243; K. BALTZER, *Deutero-Isaiah* (Hermeneia, trans. M. Kohl; Minneapolis, MN 2001) 131-132.

⁽⁹⁾ Isa 53 is still the dominate position regarding the background of Mark 10,45c/Matt 20,28c. For a discussion, see R. WATTS, *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark* (WUNT II/88; Tübingen 1996) 270-284.

I would like to thank Ryan Smith for providing me several sources used to write this article.

RECENSIONES

Vetus Testamentum

Edgar KELLENBERGER, *Die Verstockung Pharaos*. Exegetische und auslegungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Exodus 1–15 (BWANT 171). Stuttgart, Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2006. vi-304p. 16 × 24. €29

A few years ago, I received several letters from Edgar Kellenberger who was interested in the continuation of my doctoral dissertation and eventual publication of the so-called Plague Narrative in Exod 7–11. I personally did not know the author at that time, but discovered he was a ‘Pfarrer in der Schweiz’ and moreover, he was studying the ‘hardening motif’. Against that background, it was a considerable surprise to be asked by *Biblica* to discuss Kellenberger’s book on *Die Verstockung Pharaos*. I realise that this book is the result of his many years of study on the topic matter.

Kellenberger works together with his wife — both theologians — in the ‘Kirchgemeinde’ of Liestal-Seltisberg (CH). Notwithstanding the intensive work that pastoral care involves and no less than 25 years after his doctoral dissertation (promoter Hans Joachim Stoebe), he succeeded in finalising an impressive study on one of the most ‘irritierenden Aussagen der Bibel’ (5). Indeed, ever since the monography of F. Hesse, *Das Verstockungsproblem im Alten Testament*. Eine frömmigkeitsgeschichtliche Untersuchung (BZAW 74; Berlin 1955), no exhaustive study on this most intriguing topic has been presented. Nevertheless, Kellenberger’s study presents itself standing in a long tradition of exegetical reflection on a theologically speaking difficult matter: the ‘hardening’ of Pharaoh’s heart’, being narrated in the context of Exodus 1–15.

Kellenberger’s book is structured as follows. In his general introduction, he discusses the double aim of his book: the first presents a new interpretation of the ‘hardening motif’ (part I) and the second confronts this view with existing research, or what he calls the ‘Auslegungsgeschichte’ (part II). Kellenberger begins by situating the problem of ‘hardening’ within the framework of one’s concept of God, paradoxally contrasting the “Gewalttätigkeit und Willkür JHWHs” and the ideal “eines entgrenzenden und liebenden Gottes” (5). Within this context, Kellenberger formulates a new understanding of the ‘hardening’ motif by emphasizing the “Emotionalität” of the text. This focus on the emotional weight, being formulated from the outset, is one of Kellenbergers new and original accents. After these preliminary remarks, the author presents a critical ‘Nacherzählung’ of Exod 1–15, in which he discusses the ‘leitwörter’ and confronts ‘Verstockung’ with ‘Ungehorsam’ (8–15).

Following the introduction, Kellenberger presents his first aim (Part I), entitled *Exegetische Untersuchungen*. This section contains his own research which discusses the particularities of the hardening formulas (I), the different semantic expressions of this hardening in חזק, כבד and קשה (II), the structure of the hardening formulas in the narrative (III), the impact of literary and redaction criticism (IV), the aim of the hardening expressed in the so-called 'Zielaussagen und Absichtserklärungen JHWHs' (V), the different nuance between what Kellenberger calls 'Erstockung' and 'Ungehorsam' (VI), an elaboration on the experience of JHWH outside Israel (VII) and finally the Sitz im Leben and timesetting of the Exodusnarrative (VIII). The conclusion of this first part contains a very clear and well summarized result of the author's research of the preceding themes (IX, 178-181). Remarkably, Kellenberger's main conclusion is contrary to the generally assumed negative interpretation of the hardening: "Darum ist die übliche Übersetzung 'verhärten' weder für חזק noch für כבד erlaubt, sondern nur für das selten verwendete קשה (7,3; vgl. 13,15) berechtigt. Diese semantische Feststellung muss zu einem neuen, paradoxen Verständnis der Verstockung Pharaos führen. Dass es hier um ein letztlich positives Geschehen geht, wird durch die zahlreichen Zielaussagen sowie durch den doxologischen Charakter des Textes bestätigt" (178). In this respect, Kellenberger firstly emphasises the fact that YHWH is the central character in the Exodus narrative. Second, he places the narrative in a situation that accentuates the need for 'Identitäts-Stärkung' and specifies this as the critical situation at the time of Manasse or even later. Third, he calls attention to the 'Moralische Indifferenz' of the narrative, insofar that questions pertaining to Pharaoh's responsibility are not of central importance nor are questions relating to the reasons for punishment and hardening. Finally, Kellenberger doubts whether the theological or exegetical concern and criticism about God's violence in the narrative does not originate in a 'triumphalistic' attitude, which esteems the exegete ethically superior to the narrator.

Against the background of these conclusions, Kellenberger challenges them to a tradition of two thousand years of 'Auslegungsgeschichte'. He moves to the second aim of his book (Part II), entitled *Fragen an die Auslegungsgeschichte*. After a general introduction (I), he focuses on the ancient exegesis of the topic in Judaism (II), in the New Testament (III), and in the interpretation of the Church Fathers (IV). These views are then summarised (V) and discussed in a "Zwischenbilanz zur antiken Auslegung" (223-226). Kellenberger discovers that within the ancient interpretations, the 'hardening' has been explained in a negative way. He illustrates how the 'signs and wonders' of Exod 7-11 have been understood as 'plagues', thereby leaving aside every positive connotation. Moreover, he concludes that ancient exegesis had to cope with the difficulties of accepting God as the subject of hardening. Several attempts were then undertaken to diminish this problem and present God positively thereby resulting in a very moralising concept of God. Additionally, ancient interpretations seem to have developed a special interest in Pharaoh's character and his future which confronted the issue of God's sovereign plan and free will. After this intermediary conclusion, Kellenberger proceeds in the history of interpretation, focussing on the Reformation (VI). When comparing ancient interpretations to this later time

period, the author discovers a paradigm shift. The hardening is now interpreted in a more positive light and seen as encouragement and consolation within the context of an existential situation concerning the identity of faith. In this way, Kellenberger states that the Reformation reflects a situation parallel to the original *Sitz im Leben*. Within this interpretation, God is respected as the agent of the hardening. The interest in Pharaoh and the confrontation between God's sovereignty and free will are, at this stage, influenced by theories of predestination but without falling into complete fatalism. Nevertheless, Kellenberger concludes that the existential context of the Reformation gradually became less vigorous, causing the interpretation of God as the 'actor mali' to revert back into an emphasis on the sanction character of the 'plagues' and the 'hardening'. The next time period that Kellenberger addresses is the period of 'Pietismus' (VII) which is seen as a new 'Drücksituation'. He then ends his historical survey by discussing the interpretation of the hardening in the 20th century (VIII) based on a number of selected examples such as Jewish interpretation, the understanding of historical-critical exegesis, the view of K. Barth, the interpretation of liberation theology, and finally that of W. Visscher. In addition to providing the reader a concise survey of the interpretation of the 'hardening motif', Kellenberger's book reveals especially the particular historical and existential influences that have effected how the 'hardening' was interpreted throughout the ages.

Parallely to his conclusion after the first main part, Kellenberger formulates some summarising remarks to the second one (IX, 279-283). (1) First, the 'irritation' he reads in contemporary interpretations of hardening, which formed the starting point of his study, has been evident throughout the course of exegesis and its different interpretations. This irritation confirms his view on the 'emotional' character of the text. (2) Second, Kellenberger discerns two main directions in the traditional 'Auslegungsgeschichte'. On the one hand, the emphasis can be put on the performance of 'signs and wonders'. As such, the text itself is at the centre of interest and the narrative is observed from the perspective of the Israelites. Therefore its interpretation is theocentric. On the other hand, the focus can be laid in the affliction of the 'plagues' which does not put the text at the centre. Instead, the explanation and interpretation of the text becomes the focus insofar as it explains the plague narrative in general and the hardening as a punishment for Egypt. In this view, the focus is rather anthropocentric. If the events related are interpreted as 'plagues', the accent shifts into a moralisation of the text. However, Kellenberger states in this respect that it would be strange to expect obedience from Pharaoh who, after all, is not an Israelite. (3) A third conclusion with respect to the interpretation of the 'hardening' regards the paradoxes in the text and its doxological character. Together with the so-called 'Zielaussagen', the 'hardening formulas' have a clearly positive connotation that has been discerned in critical situations but has been altered in other circumstances in function of a moral improvement of human beings. (4) Fourth and finally, Kellenberger concludes that the traditional interpretation of the 'hardening motif' has tended towards an exaggerated stress on the dogmatic and ethical aspects of the text, e.g. in the reflection on the relation between God's and human will. He concludes: "Durch die ganze Auslegungsgeschichte lässt sich das Anliegen beobachten, Gott von einem — nach menschlichem Empfinden — unmoralischen Tun zu

entlasten, was naturgemäss auf Kosten einer verstärkten moralischen Belastung Pharaos geht" (283).

It is undoubtedly Kellenberger's merits that have provided biblical research with a thorough and systematic study of a traditionally highly problematic theological and exegetical issue. As he demonstrates in the second part of his book, exegetical research and theological reflection have had difficulties in reconciling the hardening's presentation of God with the commonly accepted Christian view of a loving God. However, the innovating value of Kellenberger's work is especially clear when one confronts this statement to the results in the first part of his monography. In presenting his own view of the 'hardening' in a positive connotation, at least as expressed in חזק and כבד, Kellenberger reads this motif with YHWH at the centre of interest. The hardening motif in this perspective emphasises that Pharaoh only had power because YHWH made him 'strong' and 'weighty'.

Kellenberger's view is indeed innovative and original. It even seems to be witnessed by some periods in the Auslegungsgeschichte, namely the ones experiencing existential 'Drucksituationen', in parallel to the original *Sitz im Leben* given by Kellenberger. Whether biblical scholars will deem it persuasive is another question. The reviewer admires the meticulous work of the present study and appreciates the illuminating summaries after each main part. The summary of the first part offers the reader a firm basis to situate the rationale of the second one. However, a general conclusion is missing that explicitly compares the results of the two parts. Such a comparison would have provided the reader with a clear synthesis, integrating both parts of Kellenberger's work.

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Johannes THON, *Pinhas ben Eleasar – der levitische Priester am Ende der Tora*. Traditions- und literargeschichtliche Untersuchung unter Einbeziehung historisch-geographischer Fragen (Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte 20). Leipzig, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt 2006. xvi-180 p. 16 × 23,5

Il libro di Johannes Thon riproduce, con lievi modifiche, il testo della sua dissertazione dottorale, moderata dal prof. Arndt Meinhold e difesa presso la Martin-Luther-Universität di Halle-Wittenberg. La tesi di fondo può essere riassunta come segue: Pincas figlio di Eleazaro viene prospettato dalla "forma finale" del Pentateuco come il capostipite del sacerdozio legittimo; egli viene inserito in una genealogia sacerdotale (Es 6) in cui l'elemento sadocita era stato preventivamente innestato nella discendenza di Aronne; il racconto di Nm 25 costituisce la ribalta su cui il figlio di Eleazaro è presentato come il prototipo del sacerdote per eccellenza, che incarna pienamente l'ideale levitico (cf. xiii-xv). La dimostrazione di tale tesi prende avvio dallo studio sincronico dei testi biblici inerenti al tema

(tra i quali emerge per importanza Nm 25) per sfociare in una breve indagine sulla storia della ricezione del testo. Il percorso della ricerca vuol essere integrato da un approccio di tipo diacronico, che si concretizza nello studio della storia della composizione del testo e nell'analisi della sua stratificazione letteraria. Infine, lo studio mira a prendere in esame problemi di tipo storico-geografico inerenti al tema.

Dopo un'esposizione sintetica della tesi, l'A. procede alla sua dimostrazione articolandola in sei capitoli; nel settimo tira le fila della propria argomentazione, evidenziandone sinteticamente i risultati. Presenteremo succintamente il contenuto dei diversi capitoli concentrandoci maggiormente sul secondo, che a motivo delle problematiche discusse rappresenta, in certo modo, il nucleo della dimostrazione della tesi di fondo.

Il primo capitolo funge da introduzione, e principia con l'elaborazione di un profilo del personaggio: ai dati biografici salienti relativi a Pincas, corredati da informazioni relative all'onomastica egizia, l'A. fa seguire una sintesi della storia della ricezione del personaggio tanto nell'AT quanto nella letteratura extra-biblica. Segue un breve saggio di *Rezeptionsgeschichte*, nonché una sezione dedicata alla storia della ricerca; conclude questo primo capitolo una nota metodologica.

Il secondo capitolo è consacrato allo studio della tradizione principale relativa a Pincas, ovvero l'episodio di Baal Peor (Nm 25). L'A. principia la sua trattazione illustrando il contesto prossimo e remoto della pericope; quindi, passa a delineare per sommi capi la logica del racconto e la sua struttura narrativa, non senza aver evidenziato alcune questioni di critica testuale. L'analisi del testo contempla due momenti: la collocazione del racconto nel suo contesto attraverso i riferimenti alla piaga che si abbatte sugli Israeliti a motivo della loro infedeltà, al personaggio Balaam ed alla località Peor; lo studio della finalità narrativa del racconto di Nm 25. Nel primo momento l'A. procede anzitutto alla classificazione delle fonti del racconto riproponendo sostanzialmente l'opinione tradizionale. Si passa, quindi, all'analisi del problema sul versante della storia della tradizione del testo, mediante uno studio delle ricorrenze di Nm 25 nell'AT: in questo contesto, trova spazio un'ampia digressione sulla località di Baal Peor, di cui vengono studiate la rilevanza biblica e le ipotesi di collocazione geografica. Lo studio della collocazione di Nm 25 nel suo contesto viene concluso dal tentativo di riconsiderare la storia redazionale del testo alla luce della teoria della *literarische Fortschreibung*: nello specifico, Nm 25,5-13.19 costituirebbe un racconto esemplare con acclusa l'allusione ad un matrimonio tra un israelita ed una donna madianita, mentre i vv. 14-18 sarebbero il frutto di un'inserzione tardiva, volta ad armonizzare il contenuto di Nm 25 con il racconto di Nm 31, dedicato alla guerra di Israele contro i madianiti. I vv. 1-4 rimarrebbero a sé stanti, a formare un'unità letteraria indipendente.

Il secondo momento dell'analisi di Nm 25 consiste nello studio della finalità narrativa dell'episodio di Pincas: anche questo passaggio dell'analisi è articolato in diversi punti, che riassumiamo brevemente. In Nm 25,6 le donne madianite vengono introdotte mediante l'articolo determinativo, cosa che dal punto di vista grammaticale rappresenta un'anomalia, dal momento che il determinativo viene solitamente usato per indicare personag-

gi precedentemente introdotti nella narrazione. Thon ritiene di poter risolvere tale aporia mediante il riferimento ad Es 2,21 in cui si parla del matrimonio tra Mosè e la madianita Zippora: il legame tra un israelita ed una madianita costituirebbe dunque un fatto notorio, e ciò giustificerebbe l'impiego dell'articolo determinativo in Nm 25,6. Il secondo passo presenta uno studio del termine *תֵּנָה*, *hapax legomenon* che viene generalmente tradotto in "tenda", in forza del contesto prossimo: partendo dalle diverse sfumature della radice nella lingua araba, l'A. arguisce che il senso più appropriato da attribuirsi a tale vocabolo in Nm 25,8 riguardi la sfera del contatto intimo tra uomo e donna, escludendo pertanto le implicazioni cultiche che alcuni autori vi vedono, intendendo la tenda come cifra del santuario. Nel passo ulteriore Thon recupera uno degli argomenti trattati in precedenza, introducendo la questione del rapporto tra Pincas e Mosè: l'inerzia di Mosè nei confronti dell'israelita che conduce ai suoi fratelli una donna madianita — un'inerzia motivata dall'imbarazzo causatogli del proprio matrimonio misto — sarebbe velatamente biasimata dal racconto di Nm 25, da cui Pincas emerge come il parente (cf. Es 6,25) che, agendo rettamente, riesce a stornare l'ira di YHWH. Il quarto passo rappresenta la sintesi del percorso compiuto: Nm 25 avrebbe come scopo la stigmatizzazione dei matrimoni misti e l'esaltazione di Pincas come eroe dalla retta condotta e dallo zelo fervente. Da un punto di vista tematico rientrerebbe, pertanto, nel novero di quei testi che trattano il medesimo problema (Ml, Esd, Ne). Ora, in questi testi si discute sulla condotta di alcuni sacerdoti che hanno sposato donne straniere (cf. Esd 10,18; Ne 13,28-30): una tradizione quale quella di Nm 25, che esalta il fervore di Pincas nell'estirpare alla radice la mala pianta dei matrimoni misti, rappresenterebbe il tentativo di riscattare l'immagine del sommo sacerdozio israelitico, antonomasticamente rappresentato dal figlio di Eleazaro. Il tema dello zelo spinge l'A. a completare l'analisi di Nm 25 mediante il raffronto con Es 32, accomunato al "racconto centrale" dalla reazione di Pincas da una parte e dei leviti dall'altra alla corruzione idolatrica degli israeliti. Mediante alcune considerazioni di carattere formale, Thon giunge a postulare che lo zelo che anima Pincas in Nm 25 sia di stampo levitico, cosa che ne farebbe di lui il sacerdote levita esemplare. Tale ipotesi è suffragata da un *excursus* sullo zelo dei leviti nell'AT e sulle relazioni tematiche intercorrenti tra Nm 25 e 17, tradizioni caratterizzate da una ribellione idolatrica che causa la punizione del popolo e dall'intervento di un sacerdote che pone fine all'ira divina.

L'accenno di Nm 25,13 ad una "alleanza di sacerdozio perenne", garantita da YHWH a Pincas in premio del suo zelo, costituisce il punto di partenza dell'analisi sviluppata nel terzo capitolo. Dopo aver specificato in che cosa consista l'alleanza offerta da YHWH a Pincas, l'A. passa ad analizzare alcuni testi dedicando ampio spazio alla pericope tematicamente più vicina a Nm 25,12-13, ovvero Ml 2,4-8: in questo contesto, Thon sviluppa l'ipotesi che tale testo profetico racchiuda una rivendicazione levitica nei confronti di prerogative sacerdotali; un elemento, questo, presente anche nella tradizione di Pincas, il cui zelo — di stampo levitico, secondo quanto stabilito nel secondo capitolo — gli vale l'"alleanza eterna del sacerdozio". Il quarto capitolo presenta la disamina di quei testi in cui Pin-

cas viene menzionato, pur senza esserne il protagonista: si tratta di Nm 31, Gs 22, Gdc 20. Il punto centrale della dimostrazione è costituito dalla considerazione del fatto che i tre testi sarebbero in reciproca relazione non solo dal punto di vista tematico, dal momento che riportano tre episodi bellici caratterizzati dall'opposizione alla deriva idolatrata messa in atto per intervento più o meno diretto di Pincas, ma anche redazionale: tali testi risponderebbero a quella rivendicazione di una purezza etica e religiosa emersa con forza in epoca ellenistica.

Sulla falsa riga del quarto capitolo, in cui vengono analizzati i testi nei quali Pincas è menzionato, il quinto prende in esame Gs 24,33: in questo caso, però, l'accento è posto sulla natura storico-geografica delle informazioni deducibili da questo testo, dal momento che l'A. analizza e discute la localizzazione di Gabaa di Pincas, come pure la storicità delle notizie relative alla sepoltura di Eleazaro. Nel sesto capitolo vengono studiati i testi genealogici relativi a Pincas, al fine di ricostruirne la genesi e gli sviluppi mediante lo stabilimento di un rapporto tra diverse tradizioni: quella facente capo a Zadok, quella dei discendenti di Eli e quella dei "figli di Pincas".

Dopo averne riassunto l'argomentazione passiamo ad una valutazione globale dell'opera, la cui novità non è certamente da ricercarsi nella tematica scelta: come ammette l'A. nelle battute introduttive, la figura di Pincas ha attirato l'attenzione di molti studiosi a motivo delle sue peculiarità ed è stata analizzata diffusamente. L'apporto di Thon si configura, piuttosto, sul versante metodologico, dal momento che la ricerca è ispirata a criteri di dialogo tra i metodi esegetici e d'interdisciplinarietà: infatti, nel corso dell'analisi esegetica l'A. cerca di superare i confini di un unico metodo, incrociando problematiche sincroniche (quali lo studio della finalità dei racconti) con altre diacroniche (vedi la ricostruzione della storia compositiva dei testi); d'altro canto, le istanze tipicamente esegetiche coesistono con questioni di natura storico-archeologica e geografica. Queste ultime in particolare costituiscono uno dei contributi più significativi della ricerca, che analizza con dovizia di particolari il materiale storico-archeologico relativo alle località di Peor e Gabaa: nello specifico, lo studio di quest'ultima località è condotto con acribia e rappresenta una buona sintesi di partenza, anche se necessita di essere integrata da un'analisi del contesto territoriale. A tal proposito rimando al recente contributo di W.M. Schniedewind ("The Search for Gibeah: Notes on the Historical Geography of Central Benjamin", *"I Will Speak the Riddles of Ancient Times". Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday* [eds. A.M. Maeir – P. de Miroschedji] [Winona Lake, IN 2006] 711-722), che investiga accuratamente la zona centrale di Beniamino, ove Gabaa sorgeva.

Da un punto di vista meramente formale, la disposizione del materiale non sempre appare chiaramente riconducibile ad una progressione logica del ragionamento: ad esempio, non sarebbe stato più opportuno, in ragione del suo carattere introduttivo, collocare in apertura della trattazione la nota metodologica che conclude il primo capitolo? E perché indugiare ulteriormente sull'analisi della composizione di Nm 25 alla fine del secondo capitolo dopo averne trattato all'inizio dello stesso?

Sul versante del contenuto, invece, ciò che può lasciare perplessi è la concisione dell'opera, specie in considerazione delle dichiarazioni d'intenti: inoltrandosi nella lettura, infatti, si rileva come lo sviluppo di una tesi tanto articolata finisca col risentire dell'esiguità di svolgimento dell'argomentazione. Cito ad esempio l'ipotesi della *literarische Fortschreibung* (47): l'A. individua nei vv. 14-18 un'inserzione tardiva, tendente all'armonizzazione del contenuto di Nm 25 con quello di Nm 31, ma tale asserzione rischia di rimanere una *petitio principii* in quanto se ne assume la validità senza curarsi di dimostrarla. La ricostruzione della storia redazionale di Nm 25 è assai complessa, e richiede un'analisi che non può limitarsi a criteri di superficie quali quello tematico: un buon esempio di ricerca accuratamente svolta è rappresentato dal commentario di L. Schmidt (*Das vierte Buch Mose: Numeri* [10,11-36,13] [ATD 7.2; Göttingen 2004] 144-152) che, pur riproducendo in buona sostanza l'opinione tradizionale, offre un'analisi approfondita delle ipotesi sostenute. Tra i più recenti tentativi di soluzione del problema emerge lo studio di U. Fistill (*Israel und das Ostjordanland. Untersuchungen zur Komposition von Num 21,21-36,13 im Hinblick auf die Entstehung des Buches Numeri* [ÖBS 30; Frankfurt a.M. 2007]): nella sua analisi della sezione conclusiva del libro di Nm, Fistill dedica ampio spazio al racconto di Nm 25 (84-107), proponendo una propria ricostruzione della storia redazionale del testo ed argomentandola finemente. Nello specifico, egli sottopone al vaglio della critica letteraria l'intero capitolo, giungendo a ritenere che i vv. 1-5 siano la parte più antica (pre-sacerdotale) del testo, laddove i vv. 6-15 costituiscono un racconto di matrice sacerdotale tendente ad esaltare lo zelo di Pincas. Il riferimento esplicito ai madianiti come nemici di Israele (vv. 16-18) rappresenterebbe l'ultima concrezione del testo, riferibile ad una mano che Fistill definisce "post-sacerdotale": dal punto di vista strutturale, tale racconto funge da anello di congiunzione tra l'episodio di Baal Peor (Nm 25,1-15) e la guerra contro Madian descritta in Nm 31.

Nonostante i limiti evidenziati, lo studio di Thon resta un punto di riferimento — se non altro, a livello d'impostazione metodologica — per chi intenda cimentarsi nell'ardua e delicata impresa di collocare le tradizioni bibliche in un contesto storico che ne renda maggiormente intelligibile la formazione.

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Marcus McDOWELL, *Prayers of Jewish Women. Studies of Patterns of Prayer in the Second Temple Period* (WUNT 211), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2006. xiv-277p 15 × 23. €54.

Working on the basis of the themes covered and the images evoked in the prayers of the Second Temple period transmitted to us, this volume seeks to identify the expressions and invocations which are either directly attributable

to women or inspired a male writer of prayers. «It is a study of *Gattungen* at its core, but also explores the function of the prayers in each work and in the Second Temple period as a whole». «This provides a context for other studies concerning the role of women and religious practices in the ancient world» (Preface).

Some of the passages analysed in this book are familiar and can boast a long tradition of study, while others are practically or totally unknown, and are perhaps being examined for the first time, especially from this point of view. Indeed, interest in the literary and thematic examination of Jewish prayers has but recently taken a strong hold, and this has not yet produced many overviews or monographic studies, as McDowell himself reminds us: R. Chesnutt – J. Newman, *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine: A Critical Anthology* (London 1997); D. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 27; Leiden 1998); *Prayer from Tobit to Qumran*. Inaugural Conference of the ISDCL Salzburg 5-9 July 2003 (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel – J. Corley) (DCLY 2004; Berlin 2004).

In the last two years, publications have become far more numerous, with investigations focussing on aspects such as the 'scripturalization' of prayer (J. Newman, *Praying by the Book: the Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution* [SBL.EJL 14; Atlanta 1999]) quoted in *Prayers that Cite Scripture* (ed. J. Kugel) (Cambridge MA - London 2006), where the contribution of J. Newman, «The Scripturalization of Prayer in Exilic and Second Temple Judaism» (7-24) concentrates on Judith 9,2-14 (16-20) amongst others, one of the passages studied in this volume too. Particular attention has been paid to penitential prayer, as shown by the two volumes by M.J. Boda – D.K. Falk – R.A. Werline, *Seeking the Favor of God, Volume 1: The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (SBL.EJL 21; Atlanta 2006), *Volume 2: The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (SBL.EJL 22; Atlanta 2007), which were preceded by R.A. Werline's book, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: the Development of a Religious Institution* (SBL.EJL 13; Atlanta 1998). Finally, mention should be made of R.A. Werline's *Pray like this: understanding prayer in the Bible* (New York 2007) and, especially, T.M. Jonquière's *Prayer in Josephus* (Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 70; Leiden 2007).

Undoubtedly, the Qumran documents have contributed greatly to this direction in research, not only allowing scholars to familiarise themselves with many unpublished texts, but also offering a new key for interpreting compositions known for thousands of years, such as the 'biblical' Psalms. Indeed, in 11QPs^a we find a mixed and original collection — both as regards the elements chosen and their order — of psalms from the Jewish scriptures, with a few witnessed heretofore only by ancient versions of biblical texts (the Septuagint, *P^šittā*) and others which are totally unknown. Moreover, the presence of an actualizing commentary of the literary *pešer* genre devoted to the Psalms documents the prophetic interpretation of this book.

The increased circulation of the studies on the Septuagint version and on Judaic-Hellenistic literature have also provided fundamental material for the study of prayers: it is well-known that the *corpus* of the Septuagint contains prayer texts which do not appear in the MT (cf. Esther, Daniel [chap. 3,

Susanna]), without mentioning components contained in books not included in the Jewish scriptures (Judith, Tobit).

McDowell's volume, which developed out of his doctorate thesis, proposes «to provide a comprehensive overview of the prayers of Jewish women found in the Jewish literature of the Second Temple period», but «does not often delve as deeply into some of the interesting issues that appear in specific texts - that is left for other studies» (Preface).

The book is divided into 5 chapters, of which the first is the Introduction (1-31) and the fifth consists of the Summaries and Conclusions (197-214). There follows a brief Appendix (215-221) on the prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls, in the *Life of Adam and Eve* and in the *Apocalypse of Moses*, and finally in Inscriptions and Papyri. The Bibliography (223-244) and the indices (Ancient Sources [245-263]; Modern Authors [266-268]; Subjects [269-277]) complete the volume.

The central chapters (2-4) present the passages examined, which are divided chronologically: Chapter 2 'Prayers of Jewish Women in Documents from the Second to the First Century BCE' (33-87); Chapter 3 'Prayers of Jewish Women in Documents from the First Century BCE to the First Century CE' (89-158); 'Prayers of Jewish Women in Documents from the First to the Second Century CE' (159-195).

Within the chronological division, for every period considered, the author makes a further geographical-historical-social distinction according to whether the components are of Palestinian or Diaspora Origin. However, in some cases, this may be a bone of contention for scholars, and not purely self-evident (e.g. the Additions to Esther and Second Maccabees).

In the Introduction the author reviews the contrasting opinions of those who have studied the role of women in the social and religious life of the period under examination: it seems we can deduce that, in the diaspora, women (whether Jewish or not) enjoyed greater freedom of movement and action. The situation in Egypt is the best documented, due to the numerous attestations transmitted in the papyri: apart from these, the sources are predominantly literary, thus subjected to a re-elaboration that owes much to the literary genre in which they were composed.

The prayers contained in the Literature of Second Temple Judaism relied on earlier prayer traditions and used the Hebrew Bible as their main source of inspiration and constant reference, not only as regards the aforementioned phenomenon of scripturalization of prayer, but also as concerns the composition of prayers put in the mouths of famous personages in the Scripture text.

Alongside the words of the prayers, as pronounced directly or reported, other — variable — factors are examined in connection with the people or situations:

the *Status or Title of Those Offering Prayers*, which changes, not only from a religious point of view (Israelites/Jews or Gentiles) but also politically and socially speaking (the rich, the powerful, priests, the poor) and according to the role (public or private) of the prayers;

Gestures and Acts Associated with Prayer, which considers their frequent association with fasting and tithing, plus the adoption of different positions, as is documented for the rest of the Ancient Near East;

Places and Times of Prayer, which range through private situations to public settings, from prayers rendered up in solitude to others uttered by two or more people, in the Temple, in front of it, or elsewhere.

In order to compare all the prayers and elucidate patterns that appear, each prayer is categorized in terms of its *Location, Content, Form, Occasion* and *Perspective*. The English translation for each feature dealt with is given, and the most significant expressions are quoted in the original, together with a rendition of the same in English.

The most important passages studied in chap. 2 are the best known, as all of them (except *Jubilees*) belong to the biblical text in the Greek tradition: Addition C to Esther (37-40) – which is quoted following the *Vulgata* numbering (14,3-19), giving the Additions in an appendix, removed from their context, and not in the more logical sequence that inserts them in the text (numbering them 4,171-z, as A. Rahlfs does in this edition), Judith's prayer (16,1-17) (53-55), Rebecca's matriarchal benediction of Jacob in *Jubilees* (25,15-23) (59-61), Susanna's prayers (67-71), Sarah's prayer (Tob 3,11b-15) (78-82). Chap. 2 examines prayers or references to prayer, in which public prayers predominate over private or semi-private prayers. The majority of prayers are petitions, while one third consist of blessings or benedictions. The prayers in Judith, Tobit, and *Jubilees* include feminine language and imagery: the prayers of Rebecca in *Jubilees* and Judith's two lengthy prayers are perhaps the most striking examples. The book of Judith is unusual in both the number of prayers and references and the fact that all of its prayers are by or include women.

The most significant compositions studied in chap. 3 are found in *Liber Antiquitatum Iudaicarum*, in the *Testament of Simeon* and *Testament of Judah* (*Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*), in the romance *Joseph and Aseneth* and in some treatises by Philo of Alexandria. These are, specifically, Deborah's hymn (32,1-17) (94-98) and Jael's prayer (31,5,7) (98-100), Hannah's two prayers (chaps. 50-51) (105-109) and the prayers of two women unnamed in the Hebrew Bible, but mentioned by name here: Jephthah's daughter, Seila (40,5-7) (100-104) e Samson's mother, Elumah (42,2) (104-105). The *Testament of Simeon* presents two of Leah's prayers and the *Testament of Judah* gives two of Rachel's prayers (114-115).

There are three of Aseneth's prayers (11,16-18 [127-128]; 12-13 [128-132]; 21,10-21 [132-134]) and these play a very important role in the book, especially the second one, which describes how this daughter of an Egyptian priest converts to Judaism in order to be able to marry Joseph.

In Philo's works the two prayers of Sarah (*De Abrahamo* 96,250 [144-145]) are given, as are Hagar's prayer (*De fuga et inventione* 211 [148]) and the three prayers of Rebecca (*De virtutibus* 209; *Legum allegoriae* 3,88-89; *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 4 [146-148]).

Unlike the passages in the previous chapter in which the content was overwhelmingly about community or national rather than personal issues, here prayers about personal issues predominate. The most frequent literary genre consists in petitions. *Liber Antiquitatum Iudaicarum* portrays women more prominently and positively than the other books.

Chap. 4 deals with the prayers of the second (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch (161-164), the Fourth Ezra (164-169), the Sibylline Oracles (169-176)

and Josephus' writings (176-193): «This collection of documents contains few narratives with women as major characters and in other significant roles: this chapter contains two narratives with men as the major characters (2Baruch, 4Ezra) and another set of writings by an author who intentionally de-emphasizes the role of women (Josephus), even when narrating biblical stories about women». There are also more men's prayers than women's during national crises (193-194). Again three-quarters of the prayers are petitions.

The author concludes his analysis with these statements: «While there are fewer prayers by women than men..., the former are not portrayed as significantly different from those of men in terms of social location, content, firm, or occasion. At the same time, the prayers of women exhibit other patterns of language — and in a minor way, form and occasion — that differ from prayers of men. These similarities and differences of prayer appear to tell us more about prayer as an act of piety, and less about the status and value of women in ancient Judaism than we might wish» (214).

On the whole, careful attention has been paid to the graphics (unfortunately, there are some errors due to font transcodification problems with the circumflex accent in Greek, cf. 66.72.82.192 and a few typing errors e.g. such as '*Legum Allegoria*' instead of '*Legum Allegoriae*', 146; 'Theraputae' instead of Therapeutae, 148; 'Papryi' instead of Papyri, 219-221). Moreover, some imprecision in the totals given should be pointed out (some may be misprints, but selective calculations show that all the numbers should be checked, cf. 155-158).

The interest of this book lies in its subject matter, the methodology adopted and the well-considered conclusions. The approach to the texts is original, and indications as to 'interventions' possibly due to women are given in a well-balanced fashion — leaving room for reasonable doubt — and reach plausible conclusions. The research could be continued and elaborated diachronically at the thematic and lexical levels in order to better evaluate the evolution of the language and of religious and theological thought. The usefulness of research of this kind can be measured in terms of the stimulus it provides for further analysis and new studies.

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G  rard NAUROY, *Ex  g  se et cr  ation litt  raire chez Ambroise de Milan*.

L'exemple du De Ioseph patriarcha (  tudes Augustiniennes, S  rie Antiquit   181). Paris, Institut d'  tudes Augustiniennes, 2007. 539 p
16 × 24,5.   53.08

Based on Nauroy's 1985 Paris dissertation and several papers derived from it, this book has two objectives. Its offers *De Ioseph* as a paradigm of Ambrose's exegesis. And it advertises the author's command of any and all pre-Ambrosian texts that, he thinks, address Ambrose's themes. This second goal

inspires Nauroy to devote dozens of pages even to single words, drifting perilously far from the mainland, mapping archipelagos not always on Ambrose's itinerary or even on his radar screen. For all its would-be exhaustiveness, this display of erudition evidences striking omissions in Nauroy's treatment of Ambrose's Joseph, his sources, and pertinent secondary literature. Some of the author's claims are shaky, poorly argued, or self-neutralizing. At the same time, he offers a richly defended general assessment of Ambrose the exegete. If not always first out of the gate, he documents his judgments solidly. Ambrose, he shows, is poorly served by *Quellenforschung*, especially single-source *Quellenforschung*, whether this exercise yields a plagiarist, an unoriginal imitator, a transmitter, or a critic of his sources. Nor is Ambrose an exponent either of *scriptura sola* or of "Hellenization", whether these approaches are deemed good, bad, or indifferent. Rather, Nauroy's Ambrose makes careful, cogent, adaptive, and independent use of all his sources, the Bible included. And, stylistic features of his exegesis that strike modern readers, or those informed by canons of classical rhetoric, as bizarre or otiose, should be appreciated without anachronism, in Ambrose's historical context.

Four thematic sections follow Nauroy's elaborate introduction, an introduction alerting readers to Ambrose's polysemous and manipulative interpretation of Scripture, his genre and style, his use of word-play and etymology, and his exploitation of and departures from previous exegetes. Unlike earlier commentators, Ambrose presents Joseph's persona as the culmination of his four-part series on the patriarchs as *exempla virtutis*, treatises based on sermons preparing Milanese *competentes* for baptism. Nauroy recognizes the importance of this pastoral context in assessing Ambrose's innovations in *De Ioseph*. The centrality of audience and occasion, however, often fades out of focus given the author's desire to unearth all possible sources for each topic covered. Vis-à-vis the earlier patriarch treatises, why cite *De Ioseph* as the paradigm case? Nauroy explains that it has received less scholarly attention. Lacking many overt references to classical and exegetical sources, it has been bypassed by *Quellenforscher*, an advantage, since its use of indirect sources better typifies Ambrose's exegesis. Methodological, doctrinal, and ethical concerns unite *De Ioseph* with the other patriarch treatises, despite formal differences and the fact that Joseph typifies Christ more three-dimensionally.

Omissions are notable in some aspects of Nauroy's reading of *De Ioseph* in comparison with that of previous scholars. Space forbids a bibliographical list but pertinent material exists in recent books he could have used (e.g. C.A. Satterlee, *Ambrose of Milan's Method of Mystagogical Preaching* [Collegeville, MN 2002]; M.L. Colish, *Ambrose's Patriarchs: Ethics for the Common Man* [Notre Dame, IN 2005]). Assessing the scholarship on Ambrose's style, a topic he gives full attention, Nauroy charts debates on the relationship between *De Ioseph* as we have it and the underlying sermons. He agrees that some parts of the text accent ethics and others typology; some parts contain language geared to oral delivery and others do not. Controversy centers on whether Ambrose retained those parts of the text he delivered orally and added revised, more allegorical, material, or whether he revised the entire text and then inserted the oral-delivery devices. Nauroy supports the latter view. At the same time, he

concludes that it is anachronistic to assume that Ambrose intended only the historical and moral exegesis for his *competentes* and the more arcane “mystical” exegesis for more sophisticated ears. Nauroy’s bottom line is that these various levels of interpretation were all proposed to the *competentes* in the original sermons. These auditors needed to know that the Old Testament foretold the New. Since few lay Christians knew the Bible well, they would have been unaware of his manhandling of Genesis or of the appositeness of his intertextual references. To the extent that they were classically educated, they were familiar with the polysemous interpretation of standard school authors. Indeed, some of the exegeses given to Homer and Vergil by the grammarians were more abstruse than Ambrose’s allegorizations of Joseph. These conclusions ring true. At the same time, they query the utility of the stylistic analysis discussed and defended by Nauroy at such length.

Regarding the four main themes in the body of the book, Nauroy treats Joseph’s sale into slavery by his brothers, the adulterous woman, *De Ioseph* as a political tract for the times, and the “fruits of Canaan” brought to Egypt by Benjamin. In handling the first theme, Ambrose confronts an exegetical problem less evident elsewhere in his *oeuvre*. In addition to differences between the LXX and *Vetus Latina*, the Hebrew Genesis conflates Jahwist and Elohist traditions. Thus, “the Bible” says that Joseph was sold, alternatively, for 20, 25, and 30 coins. While Philo tries to iron out these discrepancies through textual criticism, Ambrose accepts all three readings as valid, arguing that they all signify perfection, making use of both Pythagorean and earlier Christian numerology. Illuminating as it is, this finding does not acknowledge the development of doctrine in Ambrose’s patriarch treatises (on this point and others). Pythagoreanism in general, and Pythagorean numerology in particular, are doctrines he condemns categorically in *De Abraham* 2.11.80. That this application of numerology in *De Ioseph* reflects either a substantive departure from Ambrose’s earliest patriarch treatise, or an Ambrosian opportunism of the sort Nauroy wants to dismiss, are issues he ignores.

Pre-Ambrosian descriptions of the snares of the adulterous woman receive detailed attention, as does the sub-theme of nudity signifying innocence, as in *De Ioseph*, while clothing, representing the physical body, signifies sin. Joseph rejects Potiphar’s wife by a zealous act of will. Unlike the convert Abraham, he needs no education in sexual ethics. His self-mastery equips him to govern prudently Potiphar’s household and eventually Egypt as well, as Pharaoh’s minister. For Nauroy, it is Joseph’s mature political virtue that enables him to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh and his imprisoned baker and butler, although for Ambrose, as for Genesis, Joseph possesses this prophetic gift, along with all his virtues, from his youth.

Potiphar’s wife is certainly a “bad Egyptian” in *De Ioseph*, resonating with “Egypt” as pagan error and vice in Ambrose’s *De Abraham*. She is among those Egyptians whose injustice toward Joseph also references Ambrose’s own tribulations. A political reading of *De Ioseph* is legitimate, since Ambrose expressly invites it. In Nauroy’s hands, some features of this interpretation work better than others. Potiphar’s wife acceptably stands for the empress Justina, with her “adulterine” anti-Nicene beliefs and baneful influence on her son Valentinian II. Pharaoh’s baker, who loses his master’s

favor and is executed, stands for the eunuch Calligonus, the minister whose imperial order Ambrose repudiated during the Milanese basilica crisis of 386, and whose fall and execution late in 388 recommend the date of 389 for *De Ioseph*. Nauroy agrees with predecessors who have made this baker-Calligonus connection, although he thinks some of them confuse the baker with the butler, restored to his master's favor, who eventually recalls Joseph's dream-interpretation skills and launches his political career. Who, in the current political scene, stands for the butler? Nauroy's answer is: Valentinian II. Justina having died, he saw the error of his ways in 388, and was rehabilitated as emperor in the west by his eastern counterpart, Theodosius I.

There are serious problems with this claim. The butler is a eunuch, and a servant. Even acknowledging that "eunuch" in the LXX can mean, simply, "an official", without respect to his physical integrity – a point Nauroy misses – is it not a gross insult so to designate an emperor? Nauroy argues that Valentinian wielded no real power, ruling at the instance and under the leadership of Theodosius. For his part, Theodosius exacted, as the *quid pro quo*, Valentinian's embrace of orthodoxy. Whether Valentinian actually made that commitment is an open question. In his funeral oration of 392, Ambrose lauds Valentinian's virtues. But, in this genre one does not speak ill of the dead. More to the point, the butler does not truly repent, suggesting Joseph to Pharaoh purely out of self-serving ambition. Yet, for Nauroy, the unrepentant butler represents the possibly-repentant Valentinian; and the butler's recall by Pharaoh thus stands for Valentinian's recall by Theodosius. This argument is both weak and circular.

There are other, less glaring, difficulties and gaps in Nauroy's political reading. Who is Potiphar's surrogate, in fourth-century Milan? What of the "good Egyptians" in Joseph's story? Ambrose reports Pharaoh's empathy when Joseph reunites with his brothers. He even states, at *De Ioseph* 13.74, that Pharaoh rejoices with the church at their salvation. But Ambrose ignores Pharaoh's gift of Goshen to the Israelites – mentioned by both Philo and Origen – an omission that Nauroy seconds. Nor does he explain Ambrose's neglect of the Egyptian embalmers, whose expertise enables Joseph to inter Jacob with his ancestors in Canaan. Nauroy discusses other Ambrosian omissions from Joseph's story in Genesis, but not these. And, if Pharaoh represents Theodosius I, why, for Nauroy, does Ambrose fail to use these occasions to praise him?

Just as Pharaoh expresses warm human feelings for Joseph and his brothers, so also Ambrose's Joseph weeps on meeting them, as Jesus weeps for Lazarus (*De Ioseph* 10.59, 12.66-67), although less than the Joseph of Genesis or of Philo. While Nauroy highlights Ambrose's typological reading of Joseph, he undervalues this point, and the fact that Ambrose struggles more than Philo to stoicize the lachrymose Joseph. Nauroy also misjudges Philo on Joseph's political career, in comparison with Ambrose. For Nauroy, Philo's Joseph is the model statesman. But Philo, dismissing political life as such as illusory, treats Joseph's political career as a necessary, if mercifully brief, stage *en route* to the contemplative life, his true destination. As a type of Christ and the embodiment of public service, the perfection of Ambrose's Joseph lies in action, not contemplation.

Ambrose is not bound in *De Ioseph* by a sequential mode in treating his

chosen themes. Neither is Nauroy, ending his own book with the “fruits of Canaan”, Benjamin’s gifts to Egypt. Ambrose understands these largely botanical products literally, for their physical use, and spiritually, as fruits of the gospel which Benjamin’s descendant, St. Paul, will preach to the Gentiles. Here, as elsewhere, Nauroy ignores Ambrose’s linguistic limitations, discussing at length alternate meanings of the words denoting these products in Hebrew as well as in Greek and Latin. A final example of his tsunami of authorial erudition, sweeping all before it, including Ambrose’s text, is his treatment of the word *ilex*. In Hebrew, and the biblical translations of the day, *ilex* could mean holly, oak, or pistachio. The specific feature of *ilex* flagged by Ambrose is its nature as *semper virentem* (*De Ioseph* 9.46). It is as evergreen that *ilex* is a moral and allegorical sign. This fact should remove from consideration of Ambrose’s sources references to trees that are deciduous. For Nauroy, it does not.

It is hoped that readers of this book will manage to tune out comparable displays of runaway and not always relevant erudition and focus instead on Nauroy’s positive contributions. His most problematic and unconvincing claim remains his identification of Pharaoh’s butler with Valentinian II. His most important finding is an Ambrose as exegete whose work reflects his awareness of the literary expectations and aesthetic tolerances of his audience of *competentes* as well as their moral and doctrinal needs, an Ambrose who makes deliberate if eclectic choices, and creative uses, of his material, biblical, classical, and exegetical, in service of his pastoral objectives and theological goals.

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Novum Testamentum

Stephen P. AHEARNE-KROLL, *The Psalms of Lament in Mark's Passion. Jesus' Davidic Suffering* (SNTSMS 142). Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007. xiv-239 p. 14 × 22. £50.00 - \$95.00.

La monografia di Ahearne-Kroll (A.K.) esamina la ripresa dei salmi in Mc 14-15 (RP) ed è così articolata: dopo le questioni introduttive (I), considera la "Form-critical" dei salmi, soffermandosi soprattutto sull'autorità e la funzione di Davide in essi espressa, quale si ebbe lungo il decorso storico (II). Tale ampia e previa trattazione viene seguita dall'analisi delle "citazioni" dei salmi nel RP, le cui riprese sono da lui classificate come "Evocations" (III). Apre poi una finestra sullo sviluppo interpretativo dei salmi della LXX (IV) e ritorna sul testo del vangelo, concentrandosi sulla figura di Davide in Mc 10-12 (V), per riversare infine nel RP la "tipologia davidica" teorizzata (VI).

L'autore evidenzia dapprima il rischio insito nel processo di confinamento dei testi in alcune unilaterali "traiettorie interpretative" (16-23). Discute la prospettiva che rilegge la vicenda di Gesù con il modello tipologico del "Giusto Sofferente": l'errore di fondo di questa impostazione risiede nella pre-determinazione del significato dei salmi ripresi, quale conseguenza di un non attento studio del loro specifico contenuto (15). Etichettarli come "Salmi del Giusto Sofferente" pregiudica già la lettura degli eventi e ne condiziona l'applicazione in altri contesti. Per superare tali forzature ermeneutiche propone d'interrogare il RP con la teoria narrativa di P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago 1984-1988), I-III, ricercando una strategia di lettura che consenta di comprendere e articolare il processo di "riconfigurazione" del racconto.

Molte pagine sono spese per dimostrare, soprattutto con la letteratura qumranica e giovannea, ma meno con i paralleli sinottici, che: in Mc 14,18 ci sia l'evocazione di Sal 40,10; in Mc 14,34 Sal 41,6.12; 42,5; in Mc 15,23 Sal 68,22; in Mc 15,24 Sal 21,19; in Mc 15,29 Sal 21,8; in Mc 15,34 Sal 21,2 e in Mc 15,36 Sal 68,22. Già nel delineamento della struttura argomentativa si può constatare come l'autore si muova sul duplice piano diacronico e sincronico, inevitabile nell'affrontare la problematica del rapporto tra Scrittura e Vangelo. In particolare considera la modalità originale di traduzione dei salmi della LXX e la loro interpretazione della Vorlage ebraica, accentuando l'importanza delle cosiddette "soprascritte", cioè le didascalie che aprono e accompagnano ogni salmo, ascrivito all'autorità di Davide e associato alla sua vita (82-136).

L'organizzazione complessiva della tesi si sviluppa a partire da Mc 10-12: questa porzione di testo rappresenterebbe una sorta di "preparazione" al RP (137-167). La "Characterization" del personaggio Gesù non può però limitarsi alle sole sezioni dove vi si possano intravedere ipotetici prodromi davidici, ma è fondamentale che si estenda all'intero vangelo. Nell'opera di A.K. risalta una penuria di riferimenti bibliografici che escano dall'area geografica anglosassone: il confronto con contributi illuminanti in questo senso, come quello di J.-N. Aletti, "La construction du personnage Jésus dans les récits évangéliques. Le cas de Marc", *Analyse narrative et Bible. La Bible en récits*.

Deuxième colloque international du RRENAB. Louvain-la-Neuve, avril 2004 (éd. C. Focant – A. Wénin) (BETL 191; Leuven 2005) 19-42 e di M. Viron-da, Gesù nel Vangelo di Marco. Narratologia e cristologia (SRivBib 41; Bologna 2003), non appare. Ciò spiega “la visione miope” dell’oggetto studiato, in quanto condizionata dalla “precomprensione concettuale”, che viene successivamente imposta al testo. È necessario invece che la propria opinione sia sottoposta alla verifica della forma narrativa, la quale va assunta come punto di partenza d’ogni analisi e interpretazione. Volendo rimanere fedeli alla “natura del testo”, scelta da Marco, occorre seguire la traccia di come Gesù, il protagonista, si caratterizzi e come venga anche caratterizzato dagli altri personaggi, ma soprattutto da Dio, il quale rappresenta “il livello normativo” dell’intero racconto.

La conoscenza dell’identità di Gesù non si ha con la “tipologia messianico-davidica”: infatti se si osserva più da vicino la sua “performance”, vi si riscontrano sì, da una parte, i lineamenti del “messia davidico regale”, quale retaggio della tradizione ricevuta, ma, dall’altra parte, con questi tratti non viene delineata, in modo esaustivo, la sua identità. Il referente prioritario è dunque dato dalla “singolarità” del protagonista, che rilegge e fornisce la corretta decodificazione dei “titoli” a lui attribuiti: questa operazione condiziona la diegesi, la storia cioè raccontata, e il lettore (il livello extradiegetico). Il problema principale, per A.K., rimane la “sofferenza messianica” di Gesù e, di conseguenza, lo studio dei salmi viene convogliato in questa prospettiva. Ci pare al contrario che, anche metodologicamente, si debba innanzitutto analizzare il testo di Mc, seguendo la peculiare concatenazione dei vari quadri scenici, per reperire dentro l’intrinseca dinamica narrativa risposte ermeneutiche maggiormente affidabili.

L’autore disamina un delimitato gruppo di salmi (21, 40, 41-42, 68) e traslascia l’insieme del salterio con il possibile arricchimento semantico, proveniente dalle varie modalità d’interazione dei motivi salmici tra di loro e con altri testi della Scrittura. Altresì lo sforzo laborioso di voler strenuamente racchiudere i salmi in un distinto “genere letterario” (“Individual Lament”) irrigidisce il movimento narrativo marciano, incorniciandolo con ristrette categorie speculative. Riteniamo inoltre che non siano fornite indicazioni metodologiche sicure per circoscrivere la questione delle “citazioni” (evocazioni, allusioni, echi, etc.), poiché l’impianto, che regge l’intera tesi, si fonda sui criteri di Z. Ben-Porat, “The Poetics of Literary Allusion”, PTL 1 (1976) 105-128, i quali si mostrano non del tutto pertinenti alla tecnica intertestuale marciana.

Lo studioso incorre in una contraddizione all’interno della sua argomentazione, in quanto, da un lato, sostiene che la Scrittura vada ben oltre la semplice funzione apologetica, cioè la pre-ordinazione o la profezia circa “la sofferenza di Gesù” (212-213), ma, dall’altro, per giustificarla, ricorre alla tipologia che identifica tale sofferenza con quella davidica. A.K. sostituisce, in sostanza, la figura del “Giusto / Servo Sofferente” con quella del “Davide Sofferente”. Il nocciolo della questione non può ridursi tuttavia a stabilire quale cliché sia migliore, ma si percepisce l’urgenza di comprendere perché Marco utilizzi alcuni motivi, in particolare quelli salmici, e per quale ragione questi ultimi si accumulino progressivamente fino alla scena della morte di Gesù.

La difficoltà maggiore, nella quale ci s'imbatte leggendo questa tesi, è costituita dall'accentuazione e dallo spostamento sul contesto dei salmi, a scapito della dinamica narrativa marciana. A.K. intavola una riflessione globale sui quattro salmi e coarta l'applicazione del loro contesto al RP, esercitando pertanto un arbitrario cortocircuito, dal momento che appone la "soprascritta" dei salmi, dove compare appunto il nome di Davide, al racconto di Mc. Ci pare semplicistico, oltre che metodologicamente erroneo, sostenere che, una volta riscontrato il passo salmico, divenga implicito applicarne a Gesù tutto il contesto, riletto alla luce della vicenda davidica. Il punto più debole della dissertazione è dunque rappresentato dal non riscontro testuale del riferimento a Davide nel RP, dacché non ci sono in quest'ambito indizi incontrovertibili che possano dimostrarlo. Bisogna verificare se la intentio del narratore sia quella di associare il protagonista alle traversie davidiche o tenda ad altro. Stando dentro la stessa logica della tesi, la quale si appoggia sulle "soprascritte" dei salmi, esprimiamo la nostra perplessità, poiché il Sal 41, che ha una funzione di rilievo nella costruzione della scena del Getsemani (Mc 14,32-42), non presenta il riferimento "a Davide", ma "ai figli di Core".

La "tipologia davidica" è congetturata in base all'insieme degli elementi dei salmi, ma, se prendiamo il caso del Sal 21, notiamo quanto non sia corretto procedere in tale modo, giacché la disposizione di questo specifico salmo in Mc è "invertita" (15,24-34): il narratore infatti utilizza soltanto la porzione che va, a ritroso, dal v. 19 al v. 2. È certamente importante il contesto del passo salmico ripreso, come A.K. reclama, ma vanno fissati con esattezza i confini per evitare derive ermeneutiche soggettivistiche. Procedendo con elucubrazioni esterne alla configurazione marciana, si può giungere ad affermazioni che si prestano ad interpretazioni deviate, a causa di una non chiara enunciazione del proprio ragionamento, come ad esempio la seguente: "like David in at least two of these four psalms, Jesus is not innocent" (221). L'autore rileva giustamente che Mc non insiste e non pone in primo piano la tematica dell'innocenza dell'accusato, ma ciò non implica necessariamente che si debba guardare Gesù "in controluce" col Davide peccatore, essendo ripresi salmi dove vi è pure l'aspetto della colpevolezza. Nel RP inoltre ci sono tracce dell'innocenza di Gesù, come, ad esempio, nelle parole di Pilato in Mc 15,14.

Per A.K. la vita di Davide costituisce un modello importante per caratterizzare Gesù come messia regale e, a sostegno di ciò, pone dei paralleli con 1-2 Sam, in particolare 2 Sam 15-17. Tali episodi riecheggiano nei salmi, modulati come "David's variegated attempts at persuading God to act, including protest, outrage, anger, description of suffering, and conditional praise" (223). Esaminando però, con maggiore meticolosità, lo svolgimento di quelle scene, si può scorgere come siano diverse dal RP. La storia di Gesù, infatti, si differenzia: Davide, braccato dai suoi nemici, riuscì a sfuggire, a non essere perciò "consegnato nelle loro mani", salvato ogni volta dal Signore. Gesù, invece, si presenta sulla scena come il Figlio dell'uomo che "si consegna" e che "viene consegnato nelle mani dei peccatori" (Mc 14,41-42). Al rifiuto della sua autorità messianica (Mc 11,27-33) e identità filiale (Mc 12,1-12), da parte degli antagonisti, egli risponde assumendo la forma non "davidica", ma del "Messia Figlio crocifisso".

Come spesso avviene nelle trattazioni d'Intertestualità, i problemi nasco-

no quando si ha una considerazione isolata dell'inter testo, separando cioè il testo sorgente da quello recettore. Non basta individuare un segnale che rimandi ad un eterotesto, ma è necessario commisurare con acribia anche in che modo il racconto riutilizzi ed interagisca con tale contesto. L'obiettivo è ben più alto rispetto alla sola dimostrazione che Gesù sia il "nuovo Davide": il narratore infatti mira a rivelare che Gesù è "Figlio di Dio" nel modo in cui muore (Mc 15,39). In merito alla cristologia, l'impiego dei salmi assiste il lettore nel reperire il significato non tanto della sofferenza di Gesù, quanto piuttosto della sua morte. Seguendo il respiro della narrazione, Marco sposta sempre più la questione in Dio, facendola confluire nella domanda finale di Gesù (Mc 15,34). La scarsa attenzione alla forma narrativa conduce A.K. a conclusioni non condivisibili, come, ad esempio, l'interpretazione della dichiarazione del centurione (Mc 15,39), letta come domanda sarcastica, la quale porterebbe avanti gli oltraggi precedenti inferti (220-221). I motivi salmici orientano il lettore "a vedere" come il rapporto tra Gesù e Dio non s'interrompa mai, nemmeno nella situazione estrema: al piano di Dio "viene consegnato" il dramma della morte del "Figlio amato", la cui identità viene mostrata e modellata dentro tale relazione.

Il link a Davide, quale figura regale, potrebbe anche essere presente sullo sfondo del RP, soprattutto come ironia situazionale nella scena dello scherno dopo il processo romano (Mc 15,16-20) e in quella della crocifissione (in particolare Mc 15,26-32), ma le "tipologie" risultano insufficienti a caratterizzare l'identità di Gesù: l'uso dei salmi ha quindi una finalità non tipologica ma, piuttosto, teologica.

La monografia di A.K. presenta comunque il pregio di un'approfondita indagine sulla struttura interna dei salmi esaminati, emergendo su una certa mancanza, a questo riguardo, nel panorama esegetico attuale: infatti commentari e studi, generalmente, si soffermano sul TM, mentre l'esame della LXX consente d'accostare, con più precisione e correttezza ermeneutica, tali passi salmici al RP. L'intenzione che sta all'origine di questa dissertazione ci pare senz'altro interessante, degna di notevole considerazione, indicata dallo stesso autore: lasciarsi guidare cioè dalla dinamica particolare di Mc per riuscire a cogliere la funzione delle riprese dei salmi (29), ma poi questo promettente incipit naufraga, perché viene privilegiato il contesto delle "evocazioni salmiche", rispetto alla visione complessiva e al movimento pendolare avviato dalla tecnica intertestuale, per cui non traspare, purtroppo, l'originalità della narrazione marcana.

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Marida NICOLACI, *Egli diceva loro il Padre*. I discorsi con i Giudei a Gerusalemme in Giovanni 5-12 (Studia Biblica 6). Roma, Città Nuova, 2007. 476 p. 14,5 × 23. €32

One of the most stimulating areas in Johannine exegesis is the research on the profound ties between the Gospel and the Jewish society of the day. Whereas contemporary exegesis still predominantly pursues a diachronic exegesis that looks at the evolution of the text, Nicolaci tries to discover the link between relationship (Jesus/Jews), revelation and salvation.

The primary objective of Nicolaci's work is to exegetically analyze the Jerusalem discourses (JDs) in chapters 5–12 in their literary context in order to verify whether they attest to a relationship (Jesus/Jews) that manifests a saving revelation.

The author looks at the seven dialogues/discourses that John reproduces in chapters 5–12 under the viewpoint of a “two-level drama”, departing from the studies of J. Martyn, who viewed the Gospel as a mirror of the life of the Johannine community. Intertwined is the history of the text's redaction and the history of the community. The discourses undergo a Johannine interpretation: through the discourses/dialogues/conflicts of Jesus with his Jewish audiences the story of the Johannine community is told. Nicolaci methodologically rejects the idea that those discourses may be detached from their source, Jesus, and become an independent product of the community. She also turns away from the historico-critical method as applied to the Synoptics because in her mind this method would not do justice to the peculiar form of Jesus' discourses in the Fourth Gospel.

The book is structured, following the explanation of method in the first part, in three subsequent parts where the writer exegetes the discourses found in chapters 5, 7, 8, 10; part five highlights the history and theology of the JDs from Jesus to John.

Noticeable is the orthographic cleanness of the text, and the extensive index at the end of the book testifying to a broad variety of biblical and extra-biblical quotations.

What is salient in her thought is the fact that Jesus reveals himself as the Savior (“history”) in the midst of a history of violence and opposition on the part of his audience (“story”), capable of a revelatory significance and salvific purpose. Addressing himself to concrete people (historicity of the text) Jesus uses them to bring about a personal recomprehension of the Scriptures and of history. He reveals the intimacy and depth of His relationship with his Father and with the Holy Spirit in the hearing of a mostly unbelieving and hostile audience of Jews.

Nicolaci rejects the idea that the JDs constitute monolithic blocks of doctrine or monologues on the part of Jesus, interrupted from time to time by literary “adversaries”, but otherwise devoid of an authentic dialogue structure and finality. These dialogues are rather answers and invitations to act and to interpret the story that is disseminated throughout its narrative arc: they are *encounter discourses* (Attridge), becoming veritable *loci theologici* of revelation and salvation, the time-space coordinates of Christ's relation to the Jews. Seen in this light, the discourse material collected by John in these

chapters can be considered as a long literary plot of Jesus' relationship with some marginal strands of Judaism of the first century.

The author also argues that the synoptic traditions regarding Jesus' conflicts with contemporary audiences all the way to his rejection and crucifixion should not be considered as the literary source and theme for John, but rather as a parallel testimony, different in its narrative and theological crystallization. John is based on other sources and adopts a different viewpoint. The entire Gospel is reflecting a traditional *rîb*, a contention between Jesus and his opponents, but especially the JDs are conceived as the playground of that reality.

John chooses material unknown or little focused on by the Synoptics, material whose dynamics ultimately bring about the Messiah's passion and death. So therefore, the discourses are not detached in any way from history but on the contrary they portray the story of Jesus' relationship with his generally hostile audiences. The Jewish patrimony is depicted as being confronted with new theological, anthropological and ethical consequences, which in their turn entail political and social repercussions.

The JDs in the context of chapters 5–12 appertain to the story of Jesus as written from a Jewish perspective to bring to or maintain the Jews in the faith. Thus, it is not the "Johannine community" that is narrating itself in the JDs utilizing Jesus, but it is John who tells the story of the relation between Jesus and the Jews for the salvation of his community and of all those believers who over the centuries would be called to make part of the community of the Church and find life in Jesus' name.

The Johannine literary genre of the controversies with the Jews is, therefore, the result of the relationship between the "material" (due to the beloved disciple and related to the public ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem) and its dramatic representation in the narrative plot of the Gospel. It explains, in the light of the paschal mystery, the enormity of allusions contained in the answers and in the discourses of Jesus to the Jews. It also gives evidence in a consequential and increasing way to the historical gravity and the eschatological profundity of the revelation of the God of Israel. This revelation is *in nuce* already contained in these discourses and in the relationship that they really signify.

And again, one could not possibly give this literary genre a better name than the one that is well known: the Old Testament *rîb*. It is not so much a *rîb* on legal questions on the part of the custodians of the torah, than it is one caused by infidelity, presumed or real, of the partners of the covenant. It takes place between a God who reveals himself as Father in a personal and absolute way and a people that has still to learn to know itself as covenantal son and brother. The conflict revolves around Jesus who was there and then, and who is now and here in the present of the author, the "I AM". The *rîb* becomes a prophetic appeal to which the Jewish audience denies a response in faith.

And so, within the JDs "history" and "theology" are merged, the drama of a Man who affirms that he is the historical and eschatological presence of God and who can be recognized as, i.e. as Messiah and King, only after his exaltation. In the Fourth Gospel the means, that is, the drama, becomes the message. The sacred writer intended to provoke or confirm the faith by narrating how Jesus is the Lord, the Christ, the Son of God and the Son of

man, and how the God of Israel reveals himself as Father. Reading the JDs in this soteriological perspective they do not so much reveal Jesus interpreted by John through the adversarial Jews or Jewish-Christian, than the Jews (and all those they represent) interpreted by Jesus (and by John) in order to have them remain disciples, free children, inhabitants of the house and heirs of eternal life.

Deserving of support is the synchronic approach that is rooted in the conviction that the text of the JDs is historically accurate and reflective of the work of an inspired author.

Nicolaci rightly rejects the notion that the JDs form a massive chunk of doctrine monologically presented by Jesus, disrupted every now and then by literary "adversaries", but otherwise lacking a genuine dialogue arrangement and purpose. They are rather responses and encouragements to act and to interpret the story that is presented throughout its narrative.

Furthermore, the author is certainly right in reaffirming the Fourth Gospel as reflecting a traditional *rit*, a contention between Jesus and his opponents; especially the JDs are understood as the playground of that reality.

Also of topical value is the thought that it is not the "Johannine community" that is narrating itself in the JDs using Jesus, but it is the Gospel writer who tells the story of the relation between Jesus and the Jews for the salvation of his community and of all those believers who would be called to make part of the Church.

Moreover, within the JDs "history" and "theology" blend, the drama of an individual who claims to be the historical and eschatological presence of God. In the Gospel of John the means, that is, the drama, becomes the message.

Nicolaci succeeds in underlining how Jesus reveals the mysteries of the inner-trinitarian relationships, especially involving the person of the Father, to a mainly hostile audience. She does not take sufficiently into account, however, that a the most decisive part of this trinitarian revelation takes place in the cenacle (chapters 14–17) in the exclusive presence of his friends.

All in all, Nicolaci has made a very valuable contribution to the understanding of the discourses contained in John 5–12. The scholarly world today stands in need of authorial witness both to the historico-synchronical relevance of the Gospel texts, as well as to the theological profundity that flows from exegetical groundwork. Marida Nicolaci has accomplished exactly that.

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Maurice CASEY, *The Solution to the 'Son of Man' Problem* (Library of New Testament Studies 343 [formerly the *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* Supplement series]). London – New York, T&T Clark, 2007, xiv-359 p. 16 × 24. £ 80

Already an influential interpreter of this key phrase, Maurice Casey here consolidates his previous research, revising it as he proceeds, in order to propose what he sets out as “a complete solution to the Son of man problem” (319). In his own assessment, his alignment of the evidence amounts to “a massive argument of cumulative weight” (244-245). That argument, in line with Casey’s past findings, characterizes Jesus’ application of the phrase as a “generic” usage within the Aramaic language, sometimes applicable to the speaker and “a restricted social sub-group rather than everyone” (39, with citation of Barnabas Lindars’ work). According to Casey’s argument that “generic” — and perhaps one should say situational — usage was then developed, both by Jesus and after Jesus, into predictions of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Finally, an altogether secondary interpretation of the phrase in terms of Dan 7,13 resulted in the eschatological reference to Jesus’ *parousia* that suffuses the meaning of the phrase in the Gospels in Greek (272-273).

Although the main lines of this argument are simple, its development is detailed and complex; cautious treatment of evidence and rigorous scrutiny of scholarly options feature among the enduring strengths of this book, together with its economical review of a long and complex discussion, and its seemingly effortless clarity. One minor lapse involves sporadic use of the verb “retail” (22, for example) in order to speak of how a scholar presents a subject. The expression will leave some readers perplexed; presumably, it represents a new usage in British English, rather than Casey’s idiolect.

Discussion of “The State of Play” in Chapter One reaches back to the Fathers, rather than just into recent discussion, explaining the persistent recourse of Christian interpreters to incarnational emphases and/or invocations of Dan 7,13 in their ignorance of the meaning of the Aramaic idiom, *bar 'anasha'*. In taking the “generic” meaning as authentic, Casey categorizes himself with a tradition of interpretation that starts with Hugo Grotius (10-11). A past master of this history of discussion, Casey nonetheless does not assess Hugh Odeberg’s contribution in *The Aramaic Portions of Bereshit Rabbah* (Lunds Universitets Arsskrift 36.3; Lund 1939). Had he done so, he might have attributed less originality than he does to Geza Vermes’s work, since Vermes evidently drew examples from Odeberg. (Nonetheless, Casey wisely dissociates himself [33] from Vermes’s contention that *bar 'anasha'* is a circumlocution for saying “I”.) More importantly, reference to Odeberg would have enabled Casey to make his case even more strongly that “the Son of Man Concept”, the eschatological/cosmological redeemer of much recent discussion, is “a modern construct” (25).

Casey contrasts that chimera with the “relatively stable” usage of Aramaic over a period of centuries (45), which enables him both to discuss the meaning of the idiom and to retrovert Jesus’ sayings from Greek into Aramaic. Chapter Two surveys the Aramaic usage of *bar 'anasha'*. He refers

to the final sound as putting “man” in “the emphatic or definite or determined state” (59) following terminology commonly in use. Yet his thinking is rightly along the lines of a sense “determined” within the syntax, and describable neither as definite nor emphatic. That is why a generic phrase such as *bar ‘anasha’* may appear in either in the determined or undetermined state without changing its basic meaning (61).

Yet Casey gives an example from the “Testament of Ephraem” (78-79) of both use and non-use of the determined state in a single locution, and it may be argued that Ephraem here distinguishes between a situational use (in the determined state, with the speaker thinking of himself in particular, but as a person in a class) and a more truly generic use (in the absolute state). That distinction might be helpful to understand other examples of variation between determined and undetermined usages in Aramaic, and between arthrous and anarthrous usages in Greek. Casey is impatient from the outset with attempts to read a titular meaning into determined or arthrous usages (4), and he may not be sufficiently sensitive to variations based, not on theology, but on linguistic application.

Casey’s review of examples is nonetheless useful, although Chapter Two would have benefited from a systematic treatment of the differing dialects of Aramaic, which include:

Achaemenid Period (500 BCE-200 BCE; Alexandria, Cilicia, Edfu, Elephantine, Bisitun; portions of the Books of Daniel and Ezra)

Transitional Period (200 BCE – 200 CE; Arsacid, Hasmonaean [Judean and Galilean], Nabataean, Nehardean, Palmyrene, Edessene Syriac)

targumim at Qumran

Targum Onqelos

Targum Jonathan

The Old Syriac Gospels

Regional Period (200 CE-700 CE; Babylonian, Christian Palestinian, Jordanian, Mandaean, Samaritan, Syriac, Tiberian, Talmudic)

Targum Neophyti I

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan

Targums for the Writings

The Peshitta

Revived Period (700CE-1500CE; Assyrian [Nisibian], contracts in the Cairo Geniza [Babylonian and Tiberian], Geonic, Jacobite [Edessene], Modern Mandaean)

Cairo Geniza fragments

Codex Reuchlinianus

Bibliothèque Nationale Ms (mis)labeled *Hébreu* 75

Fragments Targum.

What that enormous variety implies for attempts to trace the history of any usage is not assessed, and for the linguistic typing and dating of several of the sources that Casey cites, the reader will need recourse to works cited in the bibliography. Perhaps the purpose of drawing general conclusions has compressed the treatment of individual documents too much in this instance. That possibility surfaces later when Casey himself observes that in attempting to explain Luke 22,48 as an example of an Aramaic idiom, he is operating “rather near the limits” (198) of his own findings

The basic assertion of a generic or situational usage is sufficiently strong, however, that it amply grounds the demolition of "The Son of Man Concept" in Chapter Three in linguistic terms. Casey momentarily grants the possibility of one form of this theory, the view that the one like a son of man in Daniel is an angel. He then dismisses that possibility, however: "the absence of any such figure from the interpretative section of Daniel 7 should be regarded as decisive" (91). Casey is very concerned to distance himself from the traditional identification of Jesus with the one like a son of man in Dan 7,13. In this case, his concern leads him to overlook a distinction. The Danielic imagery is, of course, taken up within the New Testament, in order to refer to Jesus' future coming in an anticipated apocalypse, but within Daniel itself, the figure is or represents an agent of redemption and disclosure within the heavenly court, and angels feature at the center of the book's message. The failure to make that distinction weakens the claim of this book to provide "a complete solution to the Son of man problem". When Casey comes to deal with Luke 12,8-9 and comparable material in Chapter Seven, he does not evaluate the possibility of an angelic reading, despite the explicit place of angels in those New Testament contexts.

A particular strength of the book lies in its Aramaic retroversions, in which Casey uses Judean Aramaic from the first century as his point of departure whenever possible. Yet he does not deal with the argument that "Amen" is not a true Aramaism (B. D. Chilton, "'Amen': an Approach through Syriac Gospels", *ZNW* 69 [1978] 203-211). Judgments of wording might naturally vary from Aramaist to Aramaist, and there are some inconsistencies (compare 138 with 144, 193 in the rendering of "sin") and misspellings (191), but these renderings merit careful study and review. Quite aside from developing the craft of retroversion, they open exciting exegetical readings: for example, that Mark 9,12 refers to John the Baptist (130-131) and that Mark 10,45 applies to James and John together with Jesus (133-134). Intriguing source-critical reflections are also peppered throughout the book.

Owing to Casey's views on the meaning of Dan 7,13, he must argue that its presentation in the Gospels to speak of a supernatural figure derives from after the time of Jesus, and that aspect of the argument is spelled out in Chapter Ten. In making his case, however, Casey only considers that reference to Dan 7,13 reflects belief in Jesus' *parousia*, and does not return to consider the angelic hypothesis. As a result, he categorizes passages as secondary on the basis of his selective interpretation of them, rather than formal or linguistic considerations. His consideration of the process of translation in the next chapter is more reflective, and less reliant on abstract logic. In the case of the treatment of John's Gospel in Chapter Twelve, however, an assumption of lateness interferes with a textured consideration. Here again, Casey's acknowledgement of the influence of traditions of the Merkavah does not cause him to re-open the possibility that a reference to angels might be relevant. The last chapter summarizes the book.

This exacting and vigorous book precludes an observation that reviewers sometimes revert to. Scholars who assess past discussion often prove more successful in demolishing old arguments than in making new ones; reviewers can then say that they are more convinced by the refutation than by the assertion. But Casey, because he works both with primary sources and a

critical awareness of previous discussion, turns this situation around: he is powerfully correct in what he asserts, and not quite convincing in what he refutes. The generic and/or situational usage of *bar 'anasha'* in first-century Aramaic, and its usage by Jesus, should be accepted as a matter of fact. No living scholar has done more to bring about that recognition than Maurice Casey. Precisely because the usage was widespread, however, generic and situational usages of the phrase should be distinguished when possible, and application of the phrase to a figure in the heavenly court such as in Dan 7,13 cannot be excluded. Indeed, when Casey comes to set out the considerations that caused translators from Aramaic to Greek to name Jesus as the pre-eminent son of man in "a major new Christological title" (262) recourse to the very possibility he rejected might yet prove actually to strengthen his case, and make his argument that much more complete.

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George HEYMAN, *The Power of Sacrifice*. Roman and Christian Discourses in Conflict. Washington, DC, Catholic University of America, 2007. Xxv-256 p. 14,5 × 22. \$69.95.

At the close of the Introduction, Heyman writes, "By the mid-third century Christianity had ... adapted the polysemous character of sacrificial language as a marker of its identity" (xxiii). A page later he adds, "Just as Roman social identity and political loyalty were expressed through sacrificial practice and imperial benefaction, Christian identity was structured around a similar sacrificial environment located first in the New Testament's interpretation of Jesus' death and then extended to the martyr" (xxiv). In making these claims, Heyman offers a new scholarly synthesis. Incorporating but moving beyond an examination of the Christian martyr tradition within the Roman empire, à la Boyarin and Bowersock, and the study of the Roman imperial cult, à la Price and Fishwick, Heyman undertakes a comprehensive exploration of sacrificial discourse, and how it served as the basis for both Roman and Christian political and religious rhetoric and as the lingua franca for expressing the conflict between the two.

Four substantial chapters follow in logical sequence, and all contribute to articulate and support Heyman's thesis. Chapter 1 details the book's interpretive approach and offers a full characterization of Roman religion along with an explanation why it is best approached via the avenue of sacrifice. Chapter 2 describes the rise of the imperial cult; its complex engagement with Roman religion, which was traditional but open to novelty; and its appropriation of Roman sacrificial discourse. Chapter 3 documents the use of sacrificial rhetoric to explain the death of Jesus and to connect baptism and eucharist to that death. Chapter 4 examines how the Christian martyr's death came to be understood and presented in sacrificial language, particularly under the rubrics of noble death and witness to a higher calling. A fifth and closing chapter entitled Conclusions fully restates the main argument of the book.

Carefully argued and well written, *The Power of Sacrifice* largely succeeds at what is sets out to do. One of Heyman's primary aims is to put sacrifice, not ideology or faith, at the heart of the conflict between Rome and Christianity, and he does so by showing how pervasive sacrificial discourse was in the ancient Mediterranean world. The added benefit is a broadening of the context for understanding sacrifice in the New Testament and early church. As a result, scholarship can no longer limit itself to Israelite or second temple antecedents, which has typically been the case among New Testament scholars. Heyman's text acts as an important corrective to such parochialism.

The book is not without flaws, however. It embraces a broad perspective and yet suffers from a certain narrowness that keeps the book from achieving all that it sets out to do. Heyman introduces the postmodern concept of discourse in chapter 1 and promotes it as the best way to approach Roman religion, which was more a matter of behavior than ideology, and to frame the

conflict between Christians and Romans. His goal is to take the gestural and dramatic as well as the verbal and textual into account (6). This interpretive approach reflects his contention that the conflict between Rome and Christianity turned more on action than belief, and it serves as an important critique of the popular notion that the Roman-Christian dispute was primarily over differing beliefs. Nevertheless, the choice of discourse does not entirely free Heyman from a “logocentric” focus, which manifests itself in several ways. For example, while he claims that Roman religion was not a text-based system, he limits himself largely to textual data to characterize it. He visits the material record rarely; he makes reference to a few inscriptions but does not explore the iconographical or architectural record for Roman sacrifice. Second and more important, as the book progresses, a growing emphasis on the rhetorical debate between Rome and Christianity tends to cast the conflict in verbal terms, as a battle fought with and over words, not actions. Discourse analysis, at least as it is employed here, does not provide enough leverage to break out of the envelope of words.

An approach more informed by ritual theory — more than the limited attention Heyman gives it — might have served the book’s purpose better. His particular emphasis on sacrifice suggests such an approach: “The ritual of sacrifice then became *the* discursive marker in the power struggle between Rome and the followers of Jesus” (46). So does the way he characterizes the Roman-Christian conflict over sacrifice, a characterization that could be clearer. At times he talks about Christian sacrificial discourse as though it simply imitated its Roman counterpart. Others times he insists that the former challenged the latter. Sometimes he insists on imitation and challenge combined: “This discourse . . . contributed to an anti-Roman, yet equally imperial, agenda offered by Christianity” (163). Ritual inversion might provide a useful interpretive model for understanding what was evidently a complex and dynamic relationship, at least in synchronic terms. Symbolic inversion is behavior that inverts, contradicts, or in some way presents an alternative to culture codes or norms, but it does so by mirroring dominate practices and thus confirming their dominance. Whether reading Christian sacrificial discourse through the lens of ritual inversion is useful or not, the point is this: Heyman’s intention to consider action and behavior alongside the verbal and textual needs to be informed by a interpretive model more commensurate with the subject. The book’s inattention to ritual is especially striking when it turns to issues of the body, particularly the body as a site of resistance (9-10, 168), because ritual theory is so well suited to treating such matters.

A second narrowness in the book keeps it from examining sacrificial discourse as broadly as it should have. For Heyman, the key juxtaposition in the conflict between sacrificial discourses is the Christian martyrs’ refusal to sacrifice to the emperor but their willingness to sacrifice themselves (x). So he focuses on the competition between Rome and Christianity in which imperial apotheosis to heaven is countered by the martyr’s assured reward (xxi). In doing so, Heyman limits himself to two strands — albeit two very important strands — of a broader discourse about sacrifice. In other words, the book is more about imperial versus Christian than Roman versus Christian sacrificial discourse.

Ancient sacrificial discourse had other strands, however. Or, to put it concretely (and physically), other things were happening in the amphitheater besides martyrs being slaughtered (sacrificing themselves). Ancient historians and classicists have increasingly come to regard the spectacles of the arena as more than diversion or entertainment. Heyman pays limited attention to these studies (165, 168), even though they articulate, in this reviewer's opinion, an understanding of sacrifice that resonates with Christian interpretations of Christ's and the martyr's death. It would have been useful to consider the *humiliores* (condemned slaves or criminals) ennobling themselves through their valor and endurance in battle — even redeeming their lives — alongside a sacrificial understanding of Jesus' death developed by Christians, which effectively undid the humiliation of his crucifixion. Likewise, the martyr's motivation and action could profitably be compared to that of the Roman elite who volunteered to undergo gladiatorial training and combat. Both it seems gave expression to protest or resistance: better to die freely and thus honorably than to submit to imperial absolutism. What happened in the arena seems more relevant to, and connected with, the sacrificial discourse of the imperial period than the notions of noble death and martyrdom that emerged in the Greek and Roman philosophical literature, which is Heyman's focus.

Other weaknesses of the book are minor—and unexpected. For a book so effective at detecting and challenging anachronistic and out-of-date interpretations, it nevertheless falls into them now and then. Heyman's definition of conscience as an "inner sense of human guilt" (103) sounds more modern than ancient. The observation that Christianity and other foreign cults had a sense of the personal and individual (10, 23, 24, 27) that Roman religion did not have (38) sounds like scholarship from the early twentieth rather than early twenty-first century. Also, for such a careful and nuanced book, at times it is too certain. Heyman presents the development of the imperial cult as though its history is undisputed (especially 79-93), though the accompanying footnotes reveal that matters are not as settled as Heyman would have them.

These criticisms, both major and minor, should be taken as suggestions for improving an already excellent book (or for taking the next step in scholarship building on it). For all the complications and theoretical problems that attend the notion of sacrifice, Heyman has employed the concept of sacrificial discourse effectively and offers an informed and refined perspective on the relationship between early Christianity and the Roman empire. Readers will be amply rewarded by the time they spend with this book.

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Arthur McCalla, *The Creationist Debate*. The Encounter between the Bible and the Historical Mind. London – New York, T & T Clark, 2006. xiv-228p. 15,5 × 23,5.

Arthur McCalla (Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax) has written a thoughtful, critical reflection on the history of the conflict over “evolution and creation”. His study begins with the rise of science at the outset of the modern period and ends with a harsh judgment on the most blatant and irresponsible contemporary articulations of “creationism” and “intelligent design”. The tilt of his reflection is that the key issue that has generated and continues to feed the conflict is an irresponsible absolutist reading of the Bible that resists the “historical-mindedness” that pervades modern science and modern hermeneutics in general.

McCalla’s survey begins with the interpretive practices of Renaissance exegesis and the turn made by the Protestant Reformation. The Renaissance, on this read, engaged in symbolic exegesis that made it possible to read “The Book of Scripture” and “The Book of Nature” alongside each other. But the humanist movement featured in the Reformation transposed the interpretive task from “symbolic reading” to the “plain sense” that McCalla reads as a literalist reductionism that did not any longer allow for playful symbolic interpretation. He suggests that the “scientific revolution” of the seventeenth century “followed directly, if largely unwittingly” from the revolution in biblical interpretation (6).

Thus the change in perspective and style is to be taken as the context within which the scientific work of Galileo, Kepler, and Francis Bacon are to be understood... no longer “interpreting a symbol” but “decoding a language” (6). Thus “plain sense” became the task of both biblical interpretation and science. The “reading of nature” became a new possibility that was not before available and Newton emerged as “a privileged decoder” of both scripture and nature.

In the midst of the seventeenth century arose the awareness that “the earth has a history” and from that point, according to McCalla, the key issue, impossible for the biblical absolutists, is the historical mindedness that is required of all responsible interpretation. Given that passion (and settled scientific premise), McCalla places accent on the way in which “historical mindedness” impinged upon scripture through the emergence of “historical criticism”. As scientists probed the ever earlier “deep time” of nature, so scripture interpreters were being challenged to fit the claims of “deep time” into biblical chronology”, a task commonly linked to the name of James Ussher.

As something of an interlude in the book, McCalla considers the extended poem of Alfred Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, which voices the poet’s tortured reflection on death and the possibility of immortality. Tennyson is deeply aware, in the poem, that the new science has completely eroded the old religious assumptions; finally he must settle for “the inward evidence” of personal experience as the ground from which to reject natural theology that denied hope for immortality. McCalla’s point in the discussion is to show the ways in which the new science completely challenged the old theological

certitudes. Much of the historical argument that the book takes up concerns the question of biblical “exceptionalism”, whether the Bible can claim a privileged position out of the reach of science, or whether it also is to be subject to the cold, hard reason of scientific explanation.

Eventually the argument must come to Charles Darwin on “natural selection”. On the one hand, Darwin delineated the “non-teleological, non-purposive nature” of evolution by natural selection (115); on the other hand, Herbert Spencer offered, “a secularized version of liberal Protestant theology in which nature rather than God guarantees the ongoing social and moral improvement of humanity. At the same time it assured Victorians that the struggle and suffering inherent in capitalism and imperialism were meaningful” (115).

The reaction against Darwin (and the further rejection of purposeful providence) was predictably broad and vigorous. The book considers the resistance of Charles Hodge (Princeton Seminary) to the new work of Darwin, but then identifies his successor, Benjamin Warfield, as the one who offered an “accommodationist hermeneutic” that “allowed these American Presbyterians to regard their acceptance of evolution and an ancient Earth as compatible with orthodox Calvinism” (120). Warfield’s hermeneutic, “exemplifies the strategy used to reconcile the Bible with science by conservative Christians who rejected the higher criticism and regarded the entirety of the Bible as directly inspired by God. Whereas the creation narrative in Genesis was originally given to a scientifically ignorant audience, nevertheless the words of the Bible, when rightly interpreted, correspond to the findings of modern science” (120-121).

The book is valuable in its detailed account of arguments and counter-arguments in the late nineteenth century after the influence of Darwin had become so widespread. McCalla concludes that the “fact of deep time” offered an alternative history of humanity that in the end “eliminates the need for Christ as Savior”. The author several times suggests that a response to the emerging scientific consensus was limited to one of three options:

- To deny anything that would compromise the claims of the Bible,
- Isolate the soul or mind from our physical frame, thus fencing off the narrow subject matter of faith and precluding any larger claim for theology, or
- Radically reinterpreting traditional doctrine (xiii, 130-131).

He cites Lyman Abbott as a great proponent of the third approach of reinterpretation who concluded that: “evolutionary theories of human origins cannot contradict the Biblical account because the Bible’s truth is moral and not historical” (131). The separation of “meaning from truth” became a preferred strategy (92, 113), and thus an abandonment of the attempt to reconcile faith and scientific data.

At the end of the book, McCalla traces the interpretive contest into the twentieth century, and identifies his three options (deny, separate, reinterpret) with the interpretive trajectories of *modernism*, *liberal Protestantism*, and *reactionary biblicism*. It is clear that he has turned the “denial” motif in the opposite direction. Now the denial is a modernist refusal of biblical claims rather than a biblicist refusal of scientific claims; but the point is the same. McCalla pays particular attention to the way in which democratic populism and revivalism became the context in which the contest would be conducted,

a fine observation about why the issue is a peculiarly American problem. McCalla nicely makes a distinction between “modernism” (Enlightenment science) and liberal Protestantism that subscribed to the gains of scientific scholarship but without abandoning its own theological claims.

But the author’s primary energy is on reactionary biblicism and that in turn calls attention to the Princeton theologians (and their claim for inerrancy); he observes that fundamentalism goes beyond “literalism” to “cover to cover” inerrancy. His observation on the Scopes trial is worth noting: “In sum, the Scopes trial did not pit science against religion. The only person in Dayton who saw the trial in those terms was Clarence Darrow. Everyone else, on both sides, recognized the trial as an outlying skirmish in the battle for Christian America between Fundamentalists and their theologically liberal and modern opponents” (164).

The wake of the Scopes trial leads to a reflection on the “hard men” of creationism, most especially Henry Morris who most recently has proposed “young earth” creationism, thereby denying the scientific claims for deep time. McCalla follows Morris’s career as he moved in 1970 to “Christian Heritage College” that was founded by Tim LeHaye, author of the “Left Behind” series. The conclusion of the book is that the “creationism” of “intelligent design” is based in a profound misreading of the Bible by “some kind of transhistorical standard” (200). McCalla’s judgment is that this erroneous position will not die “until citizens accept that the Bible is a historical document”, and that it offers no escape by means of a recourse to transhistorical values...” (200). In the end, declares the author, there must be, “difficult negotiations that historical beings must engage in with each other over truth and law” (200).

McCalla’s book is of interest and of importance because it fills out in careful detail the broad outlines of the dispute of “science and religion”. Because he judges that the dispute is based on a misreading of scripture, the book settles for one idea and one argument and one affirmation that is of immense importance. At the same time, this reviewer would wish that there had been more nuance in the book. I could think of at least four dimensions of the issue that might open up the discussion beyond the finally somewhat simplistic line of argument of the book (even while that is a line of argument with which I agree in broad measure):

- More attention might be given to the absolutism of much modernist science, an absolutism now loudly proclaimed, for example, by Richard Dawkins. A case can be made that good science is not simply “decoding”, but it is also “interpretation” of a most imaginative kind, a work that makes all judgments penultimate. McCalla’s tone is rather consistently positivistic about science when in fact interpretation is at play.

- More awareness could be expressed about the thinness of much historical-criticism that became attached to the names of Julius Wellhausen (in the Old Testament) and David Friedrich Strauss (in the New Testament). More recent study has exposed the reductionism of much historical criticism. Attention to Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer might help reflect on “the prejudice against prejudice” that must be considered. It could be insisted that part of the contemporary task is to move beyond such positivistic reductionism of either a theological or scientific ilk.

– While the author accepts radical reinterpretation as a third option, he exhibits no awareness of or seriousness about such efforts in this discussion, for example, the work of Thomas Torrence, Alistair McGrath, or Jürgen Moltmann. He is inclined to think that “liberal Protestantism” simply gave in to science and covered over the surrender with nice words. In fact the matter is much more complex, because both good science and good theology are engaged in imaginative interpretation. That recognition is not apparent in this discussion.

– McCalla has little sensitivity to the culture of anxiety that propels creationism, an anxiety not about history or chronology or science, but about moral coherence and displacement. I believe, in the end, that critique of creationism that does not take such anxiety into account will contribute little to any effective negotiation.

I do not intend to critique McCalla for a book that he did not write and that he did not intend to write. He has, in his book, performed an important service for us. But he has only set the table for the work now to be done. He is surely right in his final sentence to insist that we must undertake “difficult negotiations” over truth and law. These negotiations, however, cannot go very far if unsettled matters are not honored, without assuming that everything is settled before the negotiation begins. This is a well-done book that invites us now to move on in these important matters. The opening is for humility in which all parties have fresh work to do.

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